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**AFTER THEATRE:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
PERFORMANCE PRACTICES IN
BALI, AND THE PROBLEM OF
AUDIENCES**

NATALIA THEODORIDOU

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2014

Centre for Media Studies
SOAS, University of London

Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

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Abstract

This thesis examines representations, academic, popular and local, of Balinese performance, live and recorded, and of its audiences. It aims to bring Cultural and Media Studies' approaches to bear on the study of 'Balinese theatre,' refusing to treat theatre as an art form insulated from broader cultural processes, electronic recording and mass mediation. It considers the relationship between practices of studying Balinese performance and recording it for television and ethnographic film or documentary, and indigenous practices of mediation and self-representation. It questions the adequacy of existing approaches by interrogating the conditions under which and the purposes for which Balinese practices and Bali as a whole have been represented as theatre.

Part One of the thesis investigates the summative notions that have been used in the study of Bali in order to encapsulate a complex and unknown entity. It considers the problems of imposing foreign frameworks and notions on the study of Bali and the consequent silencing of Balinese accounts of their own practices.

Part Two shifts from this critical mode of enquiry to case studies of performance practices and their mediation in contemporary Bali, and tries to offer an alternative approach, by asking what is involved in examining these practices once one has moved past the academic compulsion to study them as theatre. It focuses on different modes and contexts of performance in Bali, and considers the ways in which Balinese institutions promote 'theatre' as a hallmark of 'Balinese culture' or 'Balineseness' as a whole. It focuses on the antagonisms between the various roles Balinese assume in representing their practices by juxtaposing commentaries by different groups of people (actors, academics, media professionals, enthusiasts). It therefore attempts not to represent Balinese performance as an object, but to examine a potentially conflicting and incoherent congeries of varied and situated practices of performance.

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A Note on Orthography and Other Conventions

All foreign words and terms are italicized throughout the thesis. Indonesian words are also underlined in order to be immediately distinguishable from Balinese. Where relevant, I distinguish between Balinese registers using (A) for *basa alus*, (B) for *basa biasa* and (K) for *basa kasar*. For more information about these registers see Chapter One, note 4.

I have used the modern spelling for Indonesian introduced in 1972 (see Kridalaksana 1978). For the transliteration of Balinese, I have used the conventions of Warna *et al.* (1990), except for their Indonesianized spelling of the prefix ‘pa-,’ for which I follow van der Tuuk (1897-1912), as this reflects Balinese orthography more closely. I further distinguish between é (rhyming with ‘pay’) and è (a sound between the vowel in ‘cut’ and ‘get’).

In citations, I always reproduce the spelling and format as used in the original source. All emphases are also in the original, unless I indicate otherwise.

For foreign language quotations, I include only the English translation in the main body of the text. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own. Originals can be found in Appendix A, arranged by chapter. For example, a reference to Appendix A, note 5.3 in the main body of the text directs the reader to Appendix A, Chapter 5, note 3.

References to the date of publication and page number for in-text citations are always to the edition from which they were cited. Noteworthy original publication dates are included in square brackets. For example, ‘Barthes (2000 [1957]: 20-21)’ refers to pages 20 to 21 in the 2000 edition of a text by Barthes, originally published in 1957.

Cross references to other parts of the thesis will be indicated with ‘cross-ref.’ followed by page numbers. For example, ‘(cross-ref. 23-25)’ directs the reader to pages 23 to 25 of the thesis.

All figures referred to in-text can be found in Appendix B. Photographs are by the author, unless otherwise specified.

Chapter One: Introduction

In this thesis, I propose to use some approaches drawn from Media and Cultural Studies to interrogate academic, popular, and local representations of Balinese theatre and dance. As the live event is transient and difficult to communicate, discussing and representing such occasions depend more than is often appreciated on mediation through words and images, which articulate and transform their object. So the relationship between live and mediated performances is more complex than a simple dichotomy, as is what is involved in such representation. To address these issues I shall treat representing as a situated practice, which necessarily changes what it represents, rather than as a mirroring of an unproblematic original. It follows, therefore, that practices of theatre and dance cannot be separated from practices of studying, recording, watching and commenting on such performances. So, while my immediate object of study is what is usually called ‘theatre’ and ‘dance’ in Bali, it might better be considered as the relationship between what I shall call performance-related practices and the circumstances under which they change.

The thesis attempts to rethink existing approaches to Balinese theatre on the grounds that very few writers actually consider in detail what was said and done on stage, still less the assemblage of practices from planning and preparing a performance to how spectators engage with and make use of the event subsequently. So, rather than there being one performance—the stage event—there are several related performances; these include rehearsals, the performances of different audiences at the event or watching recordings, those of filmmakers, videographers, editors and so forth who re-articulated the performance for subsequent consumption, and those of scholars and other commentators. Following Nelson Goodman (1976), I take it that one can never represent something as itself in its fullness: one always represents something as something else on some occasion, to some audience, for some

purpose. In other words, representation is never unmediated, but requires investigation into its constitutive practices. In Bali, such performances have wider significance. They are represented as exemplifying Balinese culture by international scholarship, as well as by Indonesian and Balinese governments and the tourist industry. So the study of theatre performances raises broader issues of media and culture. For this reason, I propose to draw upon certain strands in Media and Cultural Studies to rethink theatre in Bali and, conversely, to consider whether such a study of Balinese theatrical practice may be relevant to Media and Cultural Studies.

Why Balinese Theatre?

First however, the choice of the research topic requires justification. Why research the representation of theatre, and why focus on Bali? This thesis begins from a series of questions that develop in three distinct but related directions. Can existing notions of theatre account for the breadth and variety of practices of performance, and what can be usefully analyzed as ‘performative practice’? To what extent should issues around representation be considered as practices of performance? And how might such an approach inform current understandings of Balinese theatre, or the cultural turn in Media Studies more generally?

Such a study is relevant for several reasons. Bali has been a major source of exotica and erotica for (mainly European and American) international audiences during the twentieth century (Vickers 2012 [1989]; Atkins 2012), with representations of Balinese dance and drama featuring prominently in various media (photography, feature and ethnographic films, variety ensembles touring internationally). However, how recording and broadcasting and the different processes of production affect the relationships involved in performance tends to be ignored, as if such mediation were neutral, unimportant or irrelevant. Who has been involved in the representation of Balinese culture, variously understood, and what were the

motivations and results of this tendency to dislocate these processes from their political and economical contexts?

In addition, as I shall argue below, Balinese theatre occupies a special place in twentieth-century Euro-American anthropology, not only for general claims about the nature of theatre, but about the polity and human nature itself. What role has theatre played in European thinking, which is the broader background from which I came to this research? What is a study of Balinese theatre in aid of—and for whom?

Why Media and Cultural Studies?

Granted how much has been written on the topic of Balinese theatre and dance in the field of Theatre and Performance Studies,¹ why examine the topic using approaches from Media and Cultural Studies?

First, a clarification is necessary about what is meant by Media and Cultural Studies. In this thesis, by ‘Cultural Studies’ I refer to a particular British genealogy of scholars and theorists linked to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. I shall also draw theoretically on the work of Ernesto Laclau who is arguably the key philosophical figure behind Cultural Studies. Since I shall be dealing mainly with the general issue of culture, including issues of representation, rather than with specifically media issues, with the exception of recording, by Media Studies I am referring to Cultural Studies approaches to media, that is to critical media studies that moved away from the study

¹ By Theatre Studies I refer here to the discipline that, since its development as a field independent from Philology and Literature, was devoted mainly to the study of dramatic texts and to the historical research on their productions, both past and present (Balme 2008: 2-3). By contrast, Performance Studies refers to a distinct strand of research which grew out of Theatre Studies in the 1960s (cross-ref. 136-137) and which is characterized by a focus on live events (not limited to theatre) and the social contexts in which performance-related practices take place. However, I shall argue in due course (cross-ref. 139-140) that, despite the apparent turn away from textuality and towards practice, Performance Studies scholars continued to approach social action as text.

In recent years, however, the distinction between Theatre and Performance Studies is becoming increasingly blurred, as most studies of theatre today do not focus solely on either one aspect of the medium (Balme 2008: 3).

of culture as a code or message to be transmitted and decoded and towards ‘an ethnographically sensitive appreciation of context’ (Hobart 2000: 10). So I am concerned with the point of cross-over between Cultural and Media Studies occupied by scholars such as Ien Ang, John Fiske, Stuart Hall, and David Morley, among others (see Morley and Chen 1996). I shall use Cultural Studies and/or Media Studies depending on whether the stress is on the arguments or literature from one or the other discipline.

This strand of scholarship enables me to approach the study employing the notion of articulation as it has been formulated by Hall (1986), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), and Hobart (1999). Articulation, with its dual association with both a link and an utterance, refers to the act of connecting disparate concepts into a unified whole. In this sense, analysis involves the literal pulling-apart of complex wholes that have been formed through processes of arbitrary and non-necessary linking. So articulation here refers to the practice of articulating. Inevitably, this invites questions about the contexts, purposes, and outcomes of such practices.

In order to specify articulation in daily terms, I shall use the notion of representation and ‘representing as’ (Goodman 1976; Hobart 2008). Because, as argued above, one can never represent something *as itself* in its fullness, representation transforms the thing represented, while the practice of representing is inseparable from what it describes. So representation places the emphasis on the process of transformation. In addition, because representing is a practice, it also draws attention to the contexts and conditions of representation. However, any act of representing involves one or more media. So ‘mediation’ places stress on the medium through which something is represented as something else. This would require a careful examination of the practices by which a medium (such as language, images, gestures, and so forth) affects what is being mediated.

So, given that theatre and film are both media, in trying to pinpoint the possible benefits of approaching Balinese performance through Media and Cultural Studies, perhaps we should ask first: upon what does the separation of Theatre and Media Studies hinge? And how have these disciplines treated the problems of mediation and representation? Both disciplines study people performing for a variously defined, if not taken as self-evident, audience. The study of audiences, in turn, has tended to concentrate on television, but relies on precedents from theatre for many of its assumptions. How might treating theatre and dance as media transform the way one studies them? Arguments over the immediacy of experience as a main factor separating theatre from other media downplay the idea that everything is always already mediated. In short, the divide between Theatre and Media Studies seems more artificial and business-oriented than is usually assumed. So there is a strong argument in that, by questioning this artificial divide, one may be able to address the issues involved in the study of Balinese theatre and dance in an original way.

The approach to Cultural Studies that I adopt also raises questions about theatre and dance as objects of study. Some theatre studies, particularly ones focusing on Balinese theatre and dance, tend to assume an essential object that can be studied apart from its constitutive practices. Cultural Studies enables one to question the conditions under which and the purposes for which the representation of such practices *as* an object becomes possible. This becomes particularly evident when we consider the question of what it is that has been studied (and so represented *as*) dance as opposed to theatre in Bali, and what theatre and dance have been represented *as* (cross-ref. 107-109). What is the relationship between theatre and dance as objects of study? And what might one discover if one approaches the subject in a way that refuses to naturalize and positivize either, but instead seeks to explore the conditions under which they are treated as coherent and unified objects?

However, critiques of Cultural Studies have often focused on its potential Eurocentrism (see Morley and Chen 1996); to what extent might this charge be levelled at Theatre Studies? Eurocentrism is part of the larger issue of double discursivity: how does one address other people's practices, including ones of mediation and self-representation, without reducing the known to the hegemonic language or framework of the knower? I intend to explore this issue by a close examination of performance-related and recording practices.

Finally, too often scholars have approached their various objects of study (be they Balinese culture, theatre, dance, or performance; cross-ref. 184-187) as if they were texts, assuming a transmission model and a preferred reading which is determined at the point of production and pre-accepted, while the understandings of participants are routinely ignored. Media and Cultural Studies approaches are particularly suited to my re-definition of the object of study as performance-related practices, because they allow me to challenge the notion of text, which, I shall argue, has been central to a large number of dance and theatre studies (even after the supposed shift away from textuality and towards performance), and to argue for an approach to performance which consists of assemblages or congeries² of situated and context-specific practices.

In this introductory chapter, I shall not engage in a detailed survey or in-depth criticism of studies of Balinese theatre and dance. This I reserve for Part One, which comprises a critical analysis of foreign and local imaginings of theatre and dance in Bali, and of Bali as theatre. However, by presenting the most popular theoretical approaches in the study of Bali and Balinese practices below, a series of problems and antagonisms will become evident. I shall then consider how reference to Media and Cultural Studies enables one to rethink existing approaches in interesting ways.

² I use 'assemblage' in Deleuze and Guattari's sense: it is a multiplicity of matters gathered into a single context, but 'what the multiple entails [...] after it has been elevated to the status of a substantive' is unknown (1987: 2). However, I do not wish to impose too Deleuzian a framework on the idea of practice this early in the study; for this reason, I use 'assemblage' interchangeably with 'congeries,' which stresses the lack of organization and potential heterogeneity of practices.

The Naturalization of the Theatrical Metaphor

There is a well-developed history of European thinkers and artists using theatre, with varying degrees of consistency, as a recurring theme—usually allegorical or metaphorical—through which to talk about life in general. These representations involved quite different relationships in invoking theatre, from theatre as an allegory for ontology and epistemology, to ideas about what is involved in being a person and the conditions of selfhood. In Plato's *Republic*, the allegory of the cave (514a-520a) described the material world as a shadow theatre, albeit not in quite these terms.³ The Renaissance idea of the *theatrum mundi* (Pearce 1980: 42), however, was much more straightforward: William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in *The Merchant of Venice* declared that the world is 'a stage where every man must play his part' (Act I, Scene I), and in *As You Like It* that 'all the world's a stage' (Act II, Scene VII), a phrase that I had repeated to me, slightly but significantly paraphrased, in Bali in 2012 as 'the whole of Bali is a stage' (Dibia, personal communication 21/09/2011). In the early twentieth century, Italian dramatist Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) explored the idea of people acting as *dramatis personae* on- and off-stage, and its significance for the human subject, in a number of his plays and novels, such as *So It Is (If You Think So)* (1917), *Henry IV* (1921), and *One, No One and One Hundred Thousand* (1926).

However, imagining the world as a theatre or social life as a stage is not limited to dramatists and their potentially vested interests in such a view. For example, in the hands of social scientists, metaphor tends to become substantialized. Dramaturgical models for the understanding of social life gained considerable currency in the 1960s, primarily with the

³ Plato uses the term *θαυματοποιός* for the people holding up the objects behind the prisoners in the cave, and the term *θαύματα* for the objects themselves: 'ὥσπερ τοῖς θαυματοποιοῖς πρὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρόκειται τὰ παραφράγματα, ὑπὲρ ὧν τὰ θαύματα δεικνύασιν' (514b). The terms are commonly translated as 'exhibitors of puppet shows / puppets' (Shorey 1969), or 'marionette players / puppets' (Jowett 1901). Plato in the *Republic* also initiated the discussion on the fluidity between framed theatre (i.e. Athenian drama) and unframed theatre (i.e. the illusion that is the material world), which he saw as dangerous and thus recommended that theatre be banned in the ideal Republic (607a).

work of the sociologist Erving Goffman, who used the notion of performance to describe human interactions in terms of pre-established patterns and rehearsed routines (1959). Victor Turner is also closely linked with the popularization of the theatrical approach to social processes: he first conceived of the notion of social drama when studying the Ndembu tribe of Zambia (1957, 1961, 1962), and he subsequently developed the applicability of this idea to formulate a performative approach to virtually any society (1974). While Goffman used theatre as a metaphor, Turner, drawing on Kenneth Burke (1937, 1945, 1972; Turner 1982), argued that social action is dramatic (cross-ref. 135-136). Together with Richard Schechner, the theatre director and theorist who established Performance Studies as a separate discipline, Turner initiated the quest for 'the universals of performance' (Schechner and Appel 1990). However what does the idea of universals presuppose? To what extent were participants' ideas about their own practices taken into account by Turner and Schechner? How did participants articulate their practices, and was theatre, dance, drama, or performance appropriate terms to describe them? And why might such questions be relevant?

Clifford Geertz also embraced the 'drama analogy for social life' (1980b: 172). Unlike Turner and Schechner, Geertz completely divorced the model from performing arts, and expanded the explanatory role of performance when he depicted pre-colonial Bali as essentially a theatre-state, that is, a state governed through spectacle (1980a). Several questions arise. How and on what grounds did Geertz arrive at theatre as a metaphor for Balinese politics? What was accomplished by Geertz's representation of Balinese rulers being not powerful agents, but mere actors or symbols of power? What are the consequences of the argument that this was the reason why Bali was finally colonized (1980a)? What happens when a metaphor becomes catachrestic? Is it significant that both Geertz and Schechner are American, and that Turner elaborated his approach in the United States?

Geertz's work has been criticized for his representation of Balinese politics (Schulte Nordholt 1986; Tambiah 1985), but rarely on the grounds of his chosen metaphor. The adequacy of theatre-related images was taken as self-evident. Theatre (itself a generalized and vague notion) in this sense was not only a way of representing colonization as inevitable, but also of representing and explaining Bali to the outside world.

Since Geertz's writing on the subject, theatre has ceased to be an explicatory metaphor and has come to be substantive in that it reveals the 'essence' of Bali. In a sense, the metaphor has transformed into a synecdoche for the island and its culture—to such an extent, in fact, that the presumed theatricality of Bali seems manifested even geographically: in both popular and academic descriptions, the island is 'dramatically mountainous' (Marimari 2010) and 'a snug little amphitheatre' (Pringle 2004: 1). Even the historian Henk Schulte Nordholt, in his study of Balinese politics (1996), after pointing out the weaknesses of C. Geertz's theory of the theatre-state and proposing an alternative, titled his section on Balinese geography 'The stage' and discussed it as a 'setting' (1996: 15). On a basic level, any such study involves double discursivity,⁴ which is arguably a serious betrayal on the part of an anthropologist, whose task, on Geertz's own terms, is to represent others' thinking 'From the Native's Point of View' (1974). However, there is an additional issue here: in quite literal terms, theatre in these accounts is represented as a part of Bali's natural landscape. Naturalization is one of the principles of what Roland Barthes called bourgeois myth and involves the transformation of history into nature (2000 [1957]: 129). As such, according to Barthes, myth is 'depoliticized speech' (2000 [1957]: 142). What is involved in the depoliticization of Balinese theatre?

⁴ I use the expression 'double discursivity' to highlight the problems of interpretation and translation between languages which are radically different (see Quine 1960; Asad 1986). Following Collingwood (1940), I take it that distinct societies have different metaphysics: that is people use different presuppositions in different ways in daily life. On my understanding, this usage links fairly neatly with Foucault's later sense of '*discours*,' for instance as elaborated by Deleuze (2006 [1986]). So the reference to double discursivity aims to draw attention not only to the potentially incommensurate differences between societies, but to the practices by which scholars seek to transcend the differences.

Do the Balinese Have Theatre?

In the previous section, I introduced some of the ways in which theatre has been used as a metaphor for the Balinese polity. What is wrong with using metaphors to study Bali, or anything else for that matter? What are the broader implications of such scholarship? In the first instance, I wish to complicate the issue by investigating what the actual referents are for the various theatre-related terms (theatre, drama, spectacle, performance and so forth) used by each author. What is the relationship between ‘theatre’ and ‘spectacle’ in Geertz’s *Negara* (1980a), given that the terms ‘spectacle’ and ‘theatre’ do not even have a single usage in English (cross-ref. 62-63)?

If authors cannot agree on the usage of theatre-related terms in English for the study of Western societies, perhaps it should not be assumed that the terms can be unproblematically employed for the study of Bali. What is it that has been represented as ‘Balinese theatre’? How do Balinese themselves talk about their own practices? Are the terms they use commensurate with the various European terms employed by scholars and practitioners? And what is the role of recording and dissemination of such performances?

It is important to note here that in fact there is no class term corresponding to the English ‘theatre’ or ‘dance’ in the Balinese language. Indeed the separation between theatre and dance in Bali has a distinct history with significant political and economical implications that I shall explore in detail in due course (cross-ref. 107-110). Balinese use the terms *igelan* (low register) or *sasolahan* (high register),⁵ which can be crudely glossed as ‘performance,’

⁵ The Balinese language has multiple registers, the number of which is contested in the various indigenous and scholarly sources (see Kersten 1970, 1984; Hobart 1979: 430-433). However, there are two broadly recognized registers, each with an extensive vocabulary: refined Balinese (*basa alus*), commonly referred to as high Balinese, and ordinary language (*basa biasa*), commonly referred to as low Balinese. Additionally, there is *basa kasar* or coarse language, which includes vulgar and obscene terms, but also regular vocabulary that can be used legitimately for animals, but is insulting (or even polluting) when used for humans.

However, the use of terms such as ‘high’ and ‘low’ for the distinction between registers is problematic because of the use of spatial hierarchization (see Salmond 1982), and because it says little about how each register is used in practice. For instance, it should not be automatically assumed that high Balinese is a high-

or else refer to specific genres (*Arja*, *Drama Gong*, *Gambuh*, *Topèng*, *Wayang*, to name but a few). However, even the term ‘performance’⁶ is neither unproblematic in English nor an accurate translation of *igelan* or *sasolahan*. So how could the study of Balinese theatre or the issue of identifying Bali with theatre be as unproblematic as it has been so widely assumed? And what would happen if there were, in a certain sense, no theatre in Bali?

Several models of drama, theatre, and performance developed by European and American theorists and practitioners (which I shall explore in detail in Chapter Four) have been exported for the analysis of what the analysts identified as Balinese theatre. However, what is meant by ‘Balinese theatre’ is in no way obvious, not only because what Balinese practices it refers to and how they are differentiated from everything else is unclear, but because ideas and examples of theatre are taken as self-evident even when referring to the various analysts’ own contexts. The fact that theatre is used on the one hand in such a loose and slippery fashion, and on the other is constitutive of arguments such as Turner’s or Geertz’s, raises questions about the coherence and plausibility of such approaches, which

caste language. The appropriate register to use is generally established by the relative status of the addressee. In this respect, the Balinese language is inherently context-specific and relational. In this thesis, I shall distinguish between these registers where relevant, by indicating (A) for *alus*, (B) for *biasa* and (K) for *kasar*.

⁶ ‘Performance’ and ‘performativity’ do not have one consistent usage in English, resulting in the conflation of a number of ideas. ‘Performance’ can refer to the presentation of a play, a dance, a symphony, to any event that calls for an actor (as in ‘someone who performs an action’)-spectator relationship, or even to the mechanistic performance of processors and engines. Furthermore, a great number of scholars have theorized about it. In Schechner’s ‘broad spectrum approach,’ performance includes virtually everything, with theatre, dance, music, and performance art as its subgenres, but also encompassing ‘rituals, healing, sports, popular entertainments, and performance in everyday life’ (2004: 7). Social scientists have employed the notion to describe human interactions in terms of pre-established patterns and rehearsed routines (Goffman 1959), and to map all human behaviour across an acting/not-acting continuum (Kirby 1972). Blau (1992) differentiated between ‘performing’ and ‘doing’ in all human activity in proportion to the consciousness of the doer/performer, which presupposes a distinctly European theory of the mind based on the interiorization of experience (see Taylor 1985a and 1985b). In a different vein, Butler stressed the notion of ‘performativity’ (not to be confused with performance) as ‘the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed’ (1996: 112) and suggested that it is the repetition of performative acts that through time builds the appearance of substance, that is of a fundamental constituent of reality (1999). Butler’s approach has the advantage of bringing to the fore the affinities between the theory of performativity and the theory of hegemony: ‘both emphasize the way in which the social world is made’ (Butler, Laclau, and Žižek 2000: 14).

If nothing else, what emerges from this overview is the fact that what performance is and what can be considered as performance is subject to how it is represented, and is hence tied to a set of power relations and disciplinary practices. In addition, any such representations are themselves subject to further articulation, with all the entailments of power and practice.

may have more to do with pleasing home audiences and readers⁷ than a critical examination of the subjects of study and their practices. So existing arguments depend on a questionable sense of theatre, which goes beyond the relatively minor issue of semantics and well into the question of double discursivity as a source of unrecognized hegemony. Martin Heidegger has pointed out that identity between two things cannot be established except by pre-existing criteria (1969). Indeed, the question ‘how can one think about or study Balinese theatre without comparing it or drawing examples from European theatre?’ rests on the assumption of commensurability between practices called ‘theatre’ in Europe and practices that the analyst—but not necessarily those involved—identify as ‘theatre’ in Bali.

In this sense, my research is directly relevant to a number of intellectual debates, most notably to the question of cultural translation,⁸ as it is impossible to talk generically about ‘Balinese theatre’ except by outright essentialization and what I shall term over-interpretation. There is a voluminous literature questioning facile universalizing and its attendant hegemonizing, ranging from debates on the universality of perception (Hollis 1970); to the debate around rationality and relativism (Wilson 1970; Hollis and Lukes 1982), with Joanna Overing’s critique of rationality as a universal yardstick (1985) and W.V.O. Quine on the underdetermination of theory by facts (1960); Jacques Derrida (1982) and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) on the use of metaphors in science and philosophy; and Genevieve Lloyd (1993) on the dichotomization of the world by biased polarities such as reason:imagination, male:female, mind:body, or indeed West:East. Michel Foucault in turn drew attention to the economy of power to which academic discourse and its universalizing

⁷ One such example would be Patrice Pavis’s ‘hourglass’ model of intercultural exchange, which explicitly referred to ‘our culture and that of others’ (1992: 5), at once substantializing culture as a unified and making it clear that it was ‘our culture’ that would benefit from this exchange. For a critique of the unidirectionality of this model see Lo and Gilbert 2002 and for a more general review see Knowles 2010.

⁸ Cultural translation is itself a problematic notion, not least because it presupposes that culture can be approached as language or even text (I shall explore these issues further in Chapter Six; cross-ref. 184-187). I use it here loosely in Talal Asad’s sense, as an opportunity to discuss the power inequality between languages and ‘the tendency to read the *implicit* in alien cultures’ (1986: 160). I propose to rephrase the issue as one of double discursivity (cross-ref. 15, 28), in an effort to explore the problematic assumptions involved in treating culture as a text, and to address the power relations involved in the attendant situated practices.

tendencies is intimately tied (1970, 1972, 1977), thereby rendering any attempt at articulating across-the-board truths deeply suspect of hegemony. In other words, the question is not whether ‘the Balinese’ have ‘theatre,’ but under what conditions, in what circumstances, and for what purposes ‘the Balinese’ and ‘theatre’ have historically been and continue to become articulable. It is in this sense that recordings of Balinese performance cannot be examined as self-evident or neutral, but in relation to the play of epistemological power of which they are part.

What is Bali For?

Bali has largely been appreciated and studied through a confusion between a supposed substantive (theatre), and a metaphor (the theatre state, or social life as theatre). In other words, the issue is one of using summative notions to study a complex and partly unknown entity. In this respect, Bali is not unique: Ronald Inden has shown the various metaphors that ‘Europeans and Americans [...] during the periods of their world ascendancy’ (1990: 1) have used to represent India (society as a mechanical body, religion as a jungle and so on) to be primarily about articulating concerns over the Western world and its aspirations, incoherencies, and interests. Combined with the absence of an indigenous⁹ class term for theatre in Bali, this raises the broader question of the extent to which scholarship has ever been able to approach what motivates Balinese or any society without acts of cultural translation so thorough that they end up in part constituting their object of study.¹⁰ Therefore

⁹ My use of ‘indigenous’ and ‘indigeneity’ is nominal, as it is intended here as a reference to the particular context of people invoking a dichotomy between ‘indigenous’ and ‘foreign,’ however used and understood. However, what counts as indigenous in various parts of the world in general and in various Balinese and Indonesian contexts in particular is subject to representation *as* (cross-ref. 32), and so tied to a series of ideological claims.

¹⁰ For Bali, I shall argue this in detail below, considering the possibility that Balinese theatre (and perhaps also Balinese culture and Bali in general) have been constituted as objects of study in a process not too far from what Butler termed ‘performative,’ resulting in an appearance of substance (1999). More generally, Salmond has argued that the metaphors of knowledge as territory and argument as war (1982: 70) have shaped Western intellectual discourse and Western studies of other cultures. She then raised questions about the ways in which

a critical interrogation of theatricality in Bali is an interrogation of the adequacy of academic models and knowledge not only for Bali, but potentially more generally.

What has driven the apparent determination to sum up Bali in terms of theatre? Quite what role has theatre played as a descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory device in different accounts? To what degree has the image of theatre become intrinsic to the interpretation or explanation of Bali? What other major images to depict Bali have been displaced by theatre, and with what implications? And, as theatre has increasingly been appreciated by Balinese and foreigners through the broadcast and dissemination of recorded performances, what are the broader implications? It may be reasonable to examine to what extent the study of Balinese theatre and, for instance, notions about the natural Balinese proclivity to dance (cross-ref. 116), depend on inferential racism, that is ‘those apparently naturalised representations of events and situations relating to race, whether “factual” or “fictional,” which have racist premisses [sic] and propositions inscribed in them as a set of *unquestioned assumptions*. These enable racist statements to be formulated without ever bringing into awareness the racist predicates on which the statements are grounded’ (Hall 1995: 20). What happens when Balinese themselves adopt and embrace the inferential racism involved in the assumption that Bali is naturally exotic and spectacular in all of its aspects, but nowhere as much so as in the Balinese religion?

V.E. Korn, one of the Dutch scholars who studied Bali, and especially Balinese law, in depth, remarked that ‘Bali is apart’ (1925). Indeed, Bali has long been imagined as different, apophatically defined as that which it is not. There is a substantial body of literature, the contributions of which will be assessed in due course, dealing with the processes through which Bali was variously described as non-Muslim (Boon 1977), or as pre-modern, and therefore in need of preservation and protection from the dangers of tourism and modernity

such metaphors may have shaped and closed down, for instance, Maori Studies, when Maori speak of knowledge not as territory but as scarce and precious resource (Salmond 1982).

(Vickers 2012 [1989]). Other representations describe Bali as a medium that provides access to something else: Rudolph Friederich stressed its being Sanskrit, i.e. a means to study ‘the *stage* at which the Javanese stood before the introduction of Muhammedanism’ (1959 [1849-50]: 2; emphasis added). Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, in their study of Balinese character (based on fieldwork in 1936-1939), pronounced that ‘Balinese culture is in many ways less like our own than any other which has yet been recorded’ (1942: xvi). Bateson and Mead’s work is of particular importance because it claimed singular authority by being carried out in the name of science, objectivity and truth; it has also acquired near-iconic status in the history of visual anthropology and sociology (Banks 2007: 29). What is the significance of the fact that the study of Balinese theatre coincided with, and is closely linked to, the systematic audio-visual recording of Balinese performance (and ensuing occurrences of ‘trance’) in their study of schizophrenia? Bateson and Mead stated that, in Bali, ‘the ordinary adjustment of the individual approximates in form the sort of adjustment which, in our own cultural setting, we call schizoid’ (1942: xvi). In other words, their study, sponsored by the Committee for Research in Dementia Praecox (schizophrenia), was framed by a concern for the American national character.¹¹ However prominent a subject matter in Bateson and Mead’s records, Balinese performance was initially conceived as merely a medium for the ‘objective’ documentation, through the use of photography (1942) and film (1951), of mental and emotional otherness, which was subsequently generalized to apply to the abstract and unified ‘Balinese character’ or indeed to Bali as a whole.

However, a supposedly ‘mere’ medium is anything but. Bateson’s and Mead’s methods rested on the assumption of a doubly transparent mediation: on the one hand of video recording and photography as a medium for the objective representation of reality, and on the other hand of performance as a medium through which to access Balinese character. I shall

¹¹ The motivating idea was that understanding how Balinese cope with the condition could lead to methods of child-rearing in America that would help avoid raising schizoid children.

employ Fiske's notion of 'the transparency fallacy' (1987: 282) in order to explore these problems.

The Transparency Fallacy

How recording was interpolated as an unproblematic transparent medium is evident in the outcome of Bateson and Mead's research, which included the famous *Trance and Dance in Bali* (released in 1952), an ethnographic film that attempted to showcase the schizoid individual 'in action,' by means of a scientific observation of the various physiological characteristics of trance. But what does scientific observation entail when the medium used is ethnographic film? And to what extent might the criteria of scientific investigation contradict 'the narrative, poetic, expressive, and subjective dimensions' of the work (Hansen, Needham & Nichols 1991: 201)?

Trance and Dance in Bali presented a relatively recent combination of the *Calonarang*¹² drama with the Barong kris-dance, created in 1936 (Jacknis 1988: 168). Granted that this was supposed to be a rigorous contribution to science, it is worth noting that the film actually includes footage from two different performances filmed years apart, in 1937 and 1939, while the first was commissioned for Mead's birthday (Jacknis 1988: 167). However, neither the historical details, nor the anthropologists' own involvement in producing the performance that was to serve as their medium to access 'the Balinese character' were taken into account. The entire film lasts approximately twenty minutes, condensing into carefully edited moments a complex series of events that normally lasts

¹² *Calonarang* performances draw from a legend of pestilence spread by a powerful widow-witch (a Rangda), identified with a historical queen named Mahendratta. Rangda is eventually confronted by a Barong, Rangda's lion- or tiger-like powerful opponent, and sometimes his *kris*-wielding followers. However, their battle remains unresolved. Studies and popular descriptions of such performances often refer to this confrontation as a battle between good (Barong) and evil (Rangda); however, this is an oversimplification which muddles Balinese categories.

several hours.¹³ The short and disjunctive takes are edited for continuity and literally articulated by Mead's voiceover narrative. Given that editing is the first step in fictionalizing and re-articulating,¹⁴ it may be reasonable to ask what and who was disarticulated in this process?

Trance and Dance in Bali conveys very little information about the context, content, or participants in the performances. What is the role of visuality in the film and subsequent representations of Balinese practices? What was Balinese theatre and dance *for* in this instance? Even though the ostensible topic of the film was dance, and despite the film's potential importance for subsequent representations of Balinese culture (cross-ref. 71), theatre and dance were not Bateson and Mead's objects of study. How, then, did the scholarly and popular transition to the whole of Bali being seen as theatrical happen (cross-ref. 62-63)? How have recording and other practices of mediation represented Bali to the rest of the world, and who has been involved in the manufacturing and circulation of the dominant images, concepts, and ideas?

Of course, Bateson and Mead's was not an one-off usage. Some 70 years later, in a moment of revealing, if unintentional, clarity, a Lonely Planet travel guide described Bali as:

a brand unto itself, an island that has long outgrown its cramped spot on the map to become the very epitome of the tropical paradise. Like a stack of picture postcards, the images are straight from the drawer marked 'Southeast Asian clichés': a technicolour fanfare of golden beaches, ultramarine seas, emerald palm tops and boot-polish suntans. [...] Flip the postcard over, however, and Bali's unique Hindu culture with its devotion to *art, dance, religious rituals* and elaborate *ceremonies* remains as enduring and impressive as ever (C. Williams *et al.* 2008: 209; emphases added).

¹³ The performance also had to take place during the day in order to be filmed (Jacknis 1988: 167). However, performing *Calonarang* in the daytime is considered by many Balinese highly inappropriate, if not ridiculous (cross-ref. 227-228); nowadays, only tourist *Calonarang* happen in daylight.

¹⁴ I use the term 'articulation' in the Media and Cultural Studies sense of a moment or moments of 'arbitrary closure' (Morley and Chen 1996: 115; cross-ref. 66-67), while by dis-articulation I refer to the process by which Balinese have been discursively visible, but at the same time dehistoricized and unable to comment authoritatively on their own lives and practices, except in borrowed terms (cross-ref. 165-166 and Chapter Nine).

This summarizes several key ideas: Bali is a brand (Hobart 2008), its ‘essence’ peddled through emblematic images oscillating between the generically exotic and the uniquely Hindu, while the images mentioned above are conceived as either natural and unmediated, or as if mediation were unimportant. Representations of Bali (itself by now a highly ambiguous referent)¹⁵ through various media are a pastiche of clichés: ‘In Western eyes, there was never a Bali *per se*, but only a Bali derived. The original ethnological idea of Bali sprang full-grown from the records of Portuguese Goa,’ since pictorial representations from earlier expeditions to Goa were deemed adequate to depict Bali as well (Boon 1977: 17). Leaping from this Goan Bali to the Hindu-Balinese uniqueness requires an examination of the engineering of ‘the Bali brand’ and its product, culture, i.e. art, dance, and religion.

What are the implications of the various media used to record and represent Bali at different historical moments? Why, and under what circumstances, did Bali come to be defined by its ‘culture’? How much of Balinese culture matters, or even exists, and to whom, if it cannot be recorded and mediated? And how far were representations of culture entangled with representations of theatre? Studies of Balinese theatre have, in turn, abstracted an artificial object of study and taken it as self-evident, with no attention to the media of representation and recording. As such, they are arguably examples of ethnocentrism, racism and the naturalization of Bali as an appendage—or an exotic alternative—to the West and its concerns, in which scholars are, apparently largely unwittingly, sometimes complicit. These issues will provide a frame for the main issues that this thesis aims to address, namely, the relevance of contemporary Media and Cultural Studies to Theatre Studies, and *vice versa*, where Bali is the case study. Therefore, drawing on my fifteen-month fieldwork in Bali (2011-2012), Part Two will demonstrate how considering media and culture as performances, accomplished through a series of loosely related practices of representation, commentary and

¹⁵ I am referring here to the problem of defining Bali as an object independently of its representations, and so inviting an examination of the ways it has been variously articulated and mediated.

articulation, can be useful in overcoming some of these problems. But this needs to start by reconsidering the arguments about theatre in Bali and why they matter to Cultural Studies.

Representing as a Practice

In Part One, I argue that the theatrical image of Bali has been endlessly reinforced in various registers, from Theatre Studies to the tourist industry to Balinese themselves as they were co-opted into speaking the language of the international performance circuit. Caught between psychic alterity and essential theatricality, in large part through modes of documenting and recording performance, Bali was made to instantiate one of the great examples of Otherness and to mark one of the limits of human possibility. Therefore, a critical analysis of the recording and mass mediation of performance is also a critical inquiry into the practices of constituting Bali as an object in Western romantic and scientific imagination.

If the theatrical image is to be taken critically, it invites an examination of who has used this image to what purpose and with what implications. Do Balinese treat or perform social life as ‘theatre,’ and what relationship, if any, does the theatrical image of society as described by Geertz have to changing Balinese ideas about performance? And why should Balinese ideas matter? It is unclear how the idea of politics as theatre, as well as other paradigmatic devices briefly explored above, relate to the ways Balinese themselves understand, act, and evaluate their own actions. I therefore propose to shift from such an approach to one which enables me to explore how Balinese themselves engage with their own social activities. I shall argue for the need of a bi-discursive approach, i.e. one that relates situated practices of recording and representing Bali and Balinese culture with Balinese accounts of their own activities (including intellectual and critical ones) without reducing the latter to the hegemonic image, as is usually the case. This invites one to consider

both what Balinese are doing and how this is represented (by Indonesians, Balinese, and foreigners) as context-specific practices, with particular purposes and outcomes.

The approach outlined above frames the problem as one of antagonistic representations, which involve practices of articulating and silencing. It also has the further advantage of allowing one to question, to a degree, the dichotomy between the knowing subject—here the scholar or ethnographer—and the object of knowledge, by interrogating research as a practice as well. My aim is first to highlight and problematize the hierarchization of the knower over the object of knowledge by not considering the former as self-evidently authoritative, which, besides, would demand the reconciliation of positions that are potentially incommensurate or even incommensurable, since the various knowers rarely agree with one another. Second, this approach invites one to consider the role that the recording and mediation of cultural practices played in how representations of Bali became at once so iconic and so fixed.

The proposed approach enables me to engage in detailed ethnographic research on different ways of representing theatre. This opens up the research to the interrogation of a number of Balinese understandings of themselves in practice, inviting the question of how actors or dancers examine what they do in different circumstances, how they talk about it to one another, and how they talk about it to myself and other researchers. What kinds of privileged enunciations of these practices have experts, foreign and local, made? And to what extent have they taken into account understandings of other Balinese, non-expert and non-professionals, who watch performances live and on television? And should they? What might detailed research on performance-related practices such as recording, producing, broadcasting, watching, and so forth, tell us about the ways in which Balinese engage with and represent their own practices?

What follows from the above, is a need to review not only how to understand ‘theatre,’ but primarily and fundamentally to address the issues involved in studying other people’s

practices, including the ways people mediate their practices and represent themselves to themselves and others. Therefore, my ostensible object of study is the recording of performance in Bali, but the implications of the research are, I hope, directly relevant to issues central to Cultural Studies.

Double Discursivity

As I have tried to indicate in the previous section, the issue of double discursivity lies at the core of the research. What are the criteria of judgment and explanation by which to account for what people say (or think, even) and do, and what are the implications of the use of certain European images for understanding other peoples' practices? Should these provide us with strong grounds for thinking them inadequate, what might be alternative ways for addressing these questions? And, if others' practices are being articulated in terms of a dominant register such that the participants' own understandings are disarticulated, what might be the implications for Cultural Studies which, as a discipline, sets out systematically to question hegemony?

Adrian Vickers (2012 [1989]) explored the role that erotic and exotic images produced predominantly in the 1930s played in the articulation and re-articulation of Bali throughout the twentieth century. But if the main images in circulation cannot (at least not *a priori*) be taken as the ultimate frame of reference by which to study, i.e. to translate into familiar categories, Balinese theatre or dance and its recording, then Balinese accounts of their own practices should constitute an irreducible part if not a central object of study. However, it is doubtful whether there could ever be one Balinese frame of reference in terms of practice, because its existence would demand that a highly rigid structure or system be in place. There is a distinct lack of evidence that this is the case, except insofar as structure is presupposed rather than inferred.

Furthermore, the idea of a ‘frame of reference’ itself belongs to the model of structure (Goodman 1978: 2-3), the adequacy of which in order to account for Balinese practices should be examined and questioned. If Balinese understandings prove to be irreducible to or even incommensurable with those of Euro-American analysts, the research can potentially challenge the exportability of ‘Western’ presuppositions and assumptions. Moreover, these questions should raise obstacles to the tendency to universalize and naturalize one particular way of thinking, exploring the possibility that it might be nothing more than merely one possible translational scheme in Quine’s terms (1960).¹⁶ In short, there is an opportunity here to expand Cultural Studies by making another range of cultural issues available for discussion.¹⁷ So the research suggests a potential to broaden the mode of engagement of Media and Cultural Studies beyond its current, largely Euro-American, focus. Conversely, the possibility of ways of self-representation that move beyond the idea of frames of reference altogether may be useful in de-familiarizing one’s own practices and thus making their radical reconsideration possible.

So the problem of approaching Balinese performance is not just a problem of translation, of English having grown into an enunciative language that interprets at the same time as it translates. Theories such as Schechner’s conception of performance as a continuum between ritual and theatre, the first pole being associated with efficacy, the other with entertainment, in various degrees and percentages (2006: 79-80), or Goffman’s insistence that events depicted on stage do not have ‘real’ consequences (1974: 123-155), take theatre,

¹⁶ Quine posited that, despite the fact that scientific models and theories are total and consequently self-confirming, alternative translations are always possible: ‘One frequently hears it urged that deep differences in language carry with them ultimate differences in the way one thinks, or looks upon the world. I would urge that what is most generally involved is indeterminacy of correlation. There is less basis of comparison—less sense in saying what is good translation and what is bad—[...] the farther we get off home ground’ (1960: 77-78).

¹⁷ These include questioning the idea of meaning and explanation as the purpose of interpretation, re-evaluating the applicability of European interpretive practices in other parts of the world, or even denaturalizing interpretation as a universal practice (cross-ref. Chapter Nine).

dance, performance and so forth to be about representation.¹⁸ What is the relationship between these theories and the ways in which Balinese themselves discuss specific occasions of Balinese performance? For example, several of my Balinese informants expressed the view, explored extensively in Part Two, that certain performances are dangerous and may result in malfunctioning equipment, sickness, and even death. How can this statement be examined without recourse to Balinese understandings of themselves in practice? It may be possible to apply Schechner's theory in this case, to place the performance on the efficacy/entertainment continuum, but would it aid our understanding of Balinese performance, and if so how?

To complicate matters further, Balinese tend to talk about occasions that foreign researchers have conventionally called theatre and about natural disasters, or historical and mythical events using the same terms. Discussions of power¹⁹ can account for issues as seemingly varied as the successes and failures of a 'theatrical' event as well as for politics and history (cross-ref. 175-178). So a second theme to be explored is the issue of Balinese commentary, which raises broader questions about explanation. When the participants work with entirely coherent alternative ways of interpreting and explaining events and practices, on

¹⁸ I propose to develop the argument in a slightly different direction with regard to re-presenting than Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (1994 [1968]: 57), as I am concerned here with Balinese ideas of the efficacy of re-presenting as enacting/re-enacting (Collingwood 1946: 297). On Claire Colebrook's reading of Deleuze, '[r]epresentational thinking assumes that there is an ordered and differentiated world, which we then dutifully represent' (2002: 3), assuming that representation hinges on the idea that there are 'two types of being, the real and its representation' (2002: 162), while 'the world of representation is characterised by its inability to conceive of difference itself' (Deleuze 1994 [1968]: 138). 'Whereas representationalism argues that a natural priority must be given to the thing itself, while the copy or image is an effect, the idea of series argues for any number of possible relations' (Colebrook 2002: 162), where series refers to 'groundless series: the proliferating differences of art, genetics, perception, images and "worlds"' (Colebrook 2002: 162).

However, I argue that both difference and coherence are inextricably linked with re-presenting as an intellectual practice, rather than features of the world to be described or of the resulting representations. Goodman noted that 'coherence is a characteristic of descriptions, not of the world: the significant question is not whether the world is coherent, but whether our account is' (1972: 24), and that '[w]e are confined to ways of describing whatever is described' (1978: 3). There is, in other words, no description independent of a frame of reference, and this implies that everything is always already represented. For this reason, rather than taking Deleuze's view of representation as the identification of fully determined differences in the world, I shall consider practices of differentiation themselves as an object of study. This enables me to focus on their political implications insofar as cultural difference is inseparable from Cultural Studies as a mode of enquiry.

¹⁹ The term used is *sakti*. *Sakti* is difficult to translate, but it can be glossed as unusual or counterfactual efficacy, itself another problematic notion (cross-ref. 176-177), a reason why things do not go as they should.

what grounds can the analyst ignore these as irrelevant—or even be ignorant of their existence and use?

The usefulness, then, of the above models in such instances is questionable. It is not impossible to fit any of the occasions briefly alluded to above in Schechner's schema—it may, in fact, be rather easy—but what would one learn? This highlights the way in which the sheer interpretive power of exported theory, its ability to accommodate anything anyone in the world can ever do, is also its weakness. To 'accommodate' is literally to fit the facts to a pre-conceived theory—in other words a clear case of apriorism. To avoid these traps, I shall address the issues as encompassing a congeries of practices that involve different degrees of power and closure. These include, on the one hand, the ways in which Balinese practices have been represented and constituted as an object of study *via* a variety of media in different contexts and for different purposes, and, on the other, indigenous practices of representation and commentary (with special attention to their mediation) that demand an ethnographic study involving fieldwork in contemporary Bali.

Thesis Chapter Summary

The main questions to be answered by this thesis can be briefly summarized as follows: Do the Balinese have theatre? According to whom, and under what circumstances? In Part One, I shall ask under what conditions is such a question meaningful and relevant? In Part Two, I shall consider the relationship between academic practices of studying and recording 'Balinese theatre' and indigenous practices of mediation and self-representation. In the conclusion, I shall inquire whether such an analysis is potentially relevant for Media, Cultural and Theatre Studies. And finally what are the implications for Balinese, practitioners, academics or otherwise?

In Part One of the thesis, I shall examine the ways in which and the circumstances under which Balinese theatre and dance came to be constituted (articulated, systematized, and naturalized) as an object of study by a combination of Dutch administrators, European and American scholars, Indonesian nationalists, Javanese and Balinese aristocrats, and Balinese practitioners, professors, and civil servants. How did they variously represent Bali, and in what media? What was knowledge about Bali for?

Because the study of theatre in Bali has been so widely subsumed under questionable universals, in the second part of the thesis I propose to examine in detail how Balinese have variously engaged in practices outsiders²⁰ have called theatre or dance—and which they have learned and been trained to call, record, and appreciate *as* theatre and dance too. Narrowly, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the critical rethinking of what is theatre and dance in Bali. Rather more broadly, it is to consider what such a study might contribute to rethinking theatre and performance in the field of Theatre and Performance Studies, not least by considering whether theatre and performance have undergone a significant, if unacknowledged, transformation by recording and the concomitant issues of audiences. To do so, I draw on critical Cultural and Media Studies theory, particularly the work of Fiske, Hall, Ang, Virginia Nightingale, and Hobart, and explore the potential contributions it can make to existing approaches. Conversely, this suggests something of the explanatory efficacy of Cultural and Media Studies beyond its conventional use. There are yet broader issues touched off by this study, namely the issues of mediation and self-representation, rationality and the limits of knowledge, that would go beyond the purposes of the present work. However, I hope that my detailed findings will be of use to scholars concerned with these broader issues.

²⁰ Some elaboration of what I mean by ‘outsiders’ is necessary. I take both ‘outsiders’ and ‘Balinese’ not as absolute categories, but as ones subject to representation. So both terms refer to particular, historically situated, representations of groups of people *as* outsiders (variously defined, for instance Indonesians, Westerners, colonizers, tourists, scholars) and *as* Balinese. These are by no means meant to be mutually exclusive in absolute terms, as the same people can belong in both/either group in different circumstances.

Chapter Two addresses the question of what kind of theoretical background and what kind of argument would be required for my proposed study. It starts with a brief examination of the contexts and circumstances of performance in Bali, and proceeds to link performance and practice. Drawing on the work of several theorists, this transforms the object of study from an essential whole into a congeries of context-specific practices. First, R.G. Collingwood's notion of metaphysics serves to identify the presuppositions on which studies of Balinese practices depend. Then, I employ Goodman's idea of representing *as* in order to historicize and contextualize representations as practices that involve specific people or groups of people, purposes, and outcomes. As many studies of Bali rest on a fixation of images and essences that verges on the compulsive, I draw on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic as an alternative that allows for the unfinalizability and open-endedness of Balinese performance. Finally, I consider Laclau's notions of totalizing structures in order to assess the degree to which the study of Bali can be appreciated as moments of hegemonic closure.

Chapter Three then employs these theoretical frameworks to address the question of summative notions to encapsulate a complex and unknown entity: what notions have been used to summarize Bali, Balinese, and their practices, and how were these mediated? What is the role of recording in the constitution of Bali and what were representations of Balinese theatre and dance for? Who were the main interlocutors in the dialogue about Bali, and what were their basic presuppositions? What do the various answers to the question 'what is Bali' actually tell us?

Having considered the various cases of theatre as a metaphor, synecdoche, and essence to Bali, Chapter Four turns to the consideration of theatre and dance as a positivized object. In Chapter Four, I focus on studies by European and American scholars and practitioners, who, to some extent, created the conditions under which Balinese and other Indonesians

engaged with theatre and dance as an object of study. I examine various modes of representing Bali, from a generic Orient to a medium that provides access to the universals of performance, interrogate the presuppositions on which such representations rest, and explore the changing political and economical circumstances involved. What was the role of Bali in the post-WWII idea of inter-cultural communication? How might the use of Media and Cultural Studies, which complicates the idea of the substantial transmission of culture and raises questions about the attendant issues of race, gender, class, and so forth, transform the ways in which Balinese performance has been studied?

Chapter Five then attempts to interrogate the complex relationship between outsiders' understandings of Balinese theatre, dance, society, and culture and the ways in which Indonesians and Balinese engaged with these representations as Bali became increasingly oriented towards tourism. What is the role of consumer capitalism in changing Balinese attitudes towards their own practices and the ways they represent and mediate them? How might the issue of double discursivity explored above aid our understanding and assessment of the ways in which Balinese scholars articulate themselves in foreign terms?

Chapter Six concludes the first part of the thesis by bringing together the governing ideas of studies examined in previous chapters. It interrogates closely what the various studies have claimed Balinese performance does: it expresses, it can be read as a text, it functions, it entertains. I analyze expression and function as 'totalizations' in Laclau's terms, and so as attempts to close down and limit the possibilities of engagement with the objects and subjects of study. As our knowledge and understanding of Bali currently depends on the systematic representation and mediation of Bali and Balinese culture as a fixed entity, Part One concludes with an attempt to analyze the issue, in the sense of taking it apart and approaching it in a more open-ended manner: under what conditions do Balinese practices become articulable? What are Balinese concerned with when engaging in performance-

related practices? What is the relationship between the ways in which Balinese represent their practices and the different roles in which they do so? In posing these questions, Chapter Six signals the necessity for fieldwork, which formed the basis for Part Two of the thesis.

Drawing on my fifteen-month fieldwork in Bali (2011-2012), Part Two focuses on the social and political contexts of Balinese performance-related practices and explores alternative ways of engagement with the subject once one has gone beyond the academic determination to study it as theatre or dance. Chapter Seven examines the main notions that Balinese who are professionally involved in performance-related practices use in discussion: culture (*budaya*), tradition (*tradisi*), and creativity (*kreativitas*). Noting the regularity with which these Indonesian terms were used, as well as the fact that they were (mostly European-derived) neologisms absent from the Balinese language, these terms are then related to the official discourse about Balinese culture at the International Bali Arts Festival (which has undertaken the systematization and promotion of performance as a hallmark of ‘Balinese culture’ or Balineseness as a whole), and venues such as the National TV station TVRI. By asking how audiences are positioned in such contexts and then discussing these issues with spectators in different circumstances, I attempt to trace potential antagonisms and incongruities that go against the dominant tendency to represent ‘the Balinese’ and their practices as a unified whole.

In order to address these antagonisms and to test their existence in less institutionally regulated contexts, Chapter Eight focuses on a *Topèng Pajegan* performance in the context of a cremation ceremony, and uses it to raise questions about the variety of practices involved and about what may be excluded from studies that focus on theatre or dance. Returning to the fact of the absent class term for theatre in the Balinese language, Chapter Eight discusses the crucial issue of context and of the power relations involved in its definition. In doing so, it

invites a consideration of studying Balinese theatre or dance as a practice that depends on articulation and mediation more, and more fundamentally, than is usually acknowledged.

In Chapter Nine, the final substantive section of the thesis, I argue that articulation is often misrepresented as interpretation, and so attempt to explore the extent to which interpreting practices are universal. This necessitates an examination of Balinese ideas about knowledge and meaning. In order to explore these questions, Chapter Nine draws on a secular, small-scale *Drama Gong* performance that explored issues of power, status, and the representation of history and politics in contemporary Bali. In discussing this performance with different groups of people (actors, academics, enthusiasts) with varying degrees of vested interest in the representation of Balinese performance practices, this chapter interrogates commentary as a practice, drawing attention to the purposes and circumstances of different modes of criticism.

Chapter Ten, the concluding chapter, briefly brings together the various threads that the thesis explored. It examines the implications and potential relevance of the research for Media and Cultural Studies, particularly in raising questions about the transmission model of communication, as well as the ideas of culture, meaning, and interpretation. It also evaluates the study's possible contribution to Performance Studies, particularly with regard to treating mediation as transparent and inconsequential, rather than as constitutive and transformative of the object of study. Finally, having argued the ways in which articulating and representing can be seen as hegemonic practices, and explored possible alternatives, I consider the limitations of the current study and pose questions for further research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Chapter One introduced the main research questions of this thesis, which centred around the issue of how best to approach other people's practices to do with theatre, however understood, together with its recording and mass mediation to a domestic and international audience. In order to address these issues, we need to consider how adequate existing approaches are, what are their potential shortcomings and why these might matter. As I argued in the Introduction, existing approaches to the study of Balinese theatre are flawed on several accounts.

The Problems of Studying Theatre

First, I shall argue that theatre and dance have become one of the main synecdoches by which to understand Bali and Balinese culture, character, and politics as a whole. There is a persistent hegemonic Eurocentrism in such representations of Bali and Balinese culture, which effectively pre-empt Balinese accounts by pre-articulating Balinese practices in potentially incommensurate (or, as I mentioned earlier, even incommensurable) terms. Such practices include not only organizing and performing theatre pieces and engaging with audiences, but also evaluating and commenting on such performances. Indeed, the presumed universal applicability of Euro-American interpretive models may reveal more about the assumptions and presuppositions of researchers than it does about the object of study, the pre-existence of which is itself questionable.

Second, the naturalization of representations of Bali and of Balinese theatre or dance depoliticizes and dehistoricizes the conditions, contexts, purposes, and outcomes of such representations. To address this problem, I propose to treat representing as a practice, and so

to frame the circumstances of performance and its representations using the Cultural Studies divisions of race, class, gender, and so forth.

Third, the decontextualization of the practices mentioned above depends on treating the media of representation as transparent. This results in a misrecognition of the conditions of both the production and the mass mediation of representations of Bali and Balinese culture. To what extent might this misrecognition be ideological in a broad sense, and the mediation of such representations constitutive of Bali as an object of study?

Fourth, the analysis of theatre and its recordings has too often hinged on a message/transmission model of communication, also known as the ‘hypodermic needle’ or ‘magic bullet’ model because it suggests that producer-determined meanings are directly injected into viewers’ heads (Morley 1992: 45). This raises questions not only about audiences (of theatre, live or televised, and other media), but also about mediation more broadly, because the idea that theatre, TV, or any other medium has a message that can be transmitted dissolves once the medium is reconsidered as a congeries of practices.

Appeals to scientific objectivity in studying other people’s practices also depend on some form of transparent medium, which in turn rests on the idea of the unproblematic transmission of a message or content, the interpretation of which is up to the analyst. They also fail to take into account both the hierarchization of the knower over the known that is inherent in such enquiries, and the ways in which the subjects of study represent and comment on their own practices. It is then crucial to examine the issue of double discursivity as potentially hegemonic, and to account for indigenous practices of mediation and commentary. The issue of representing Balinese culture, theatre, dance, and so forth, then, is transformed into a question of investigating an assemblage of situated practices of performing, mediation, commentary, and viewing. The latter invites a detailed discussion of audiences and the ways they have been imagined and represented.

On these grounds, several theoretical issues arise. There is a tendency to treat theatre as an unproblematic positivity²¹ or a self-evident universal. So I wish to consider how different authors address the issue and also the relationship between the various outsiders' ideas about theatre and Balinese ones (and to what extent can these be told apart). As Balinese actually have no such category, studying Balinese theatre is entirely absurd, unless one completely ignores Balinese ideas about or representations of their own practices and takes the researchers' specific contexts and frames of reference as the only ones possible. It then becomes even more striking that Balinese theatre and dance have achieved the status of an exemplification of Balinese culture (cross-ref. Chapter Three). In what follows I shall examine the significance of this disjuncture, aporia, or antagonism between Balinese understandings and accounts of their own practices and representations of their culture.

What is presupposed in existing studies of Balinese theatre and dance? If, so far, such studies have been either ignoring Balinese ideas of their practices or translating them in terms so foreign and articulations so tight that arguably they end up creating the object of study they purported to investigate, what and who is this knowledge for, and what has it accomplished?

The approach and background required to undertake the kind of study I propose would primarily involve an ontology that does not commit one to confusing common sense European usage of the relevant terms (which differs from language to language) with a critical vocabulary that is capable of reflecting on its own inadequacies. For this, I find resonances with the work of pragmatists from C.S. Peirce to Collingwood, Foucault, and Judith Butler, as they distance themselves from a particular European intellectual genealogy which they treat as universalized, and therefore hegemonic.

²¹ I use 'positivity' in Žižek's sense, as a substantial 'reality that merely *is*' (1989: 248).

A Study of Performance and Practice

In the Introduction, I presented some of the main ways in which Balinese theatre and dance have been taken to be essences. However, the practices that have been represented *as* theatre and dance and the contexts in which these take place vary widely: from festivals, such as the International Bali Arts Festival (a showcase of Balinese culture; cross-ref. 201), social occasions, religious occasions (cremations, birthdays, temple ceremonies, and so on), to shows for tourists or foreign and local dignitaries (at official functions such as conferences, opening ceremonies, and commemorations). These instances are mediated in equal variety (television, newspapers, ethnographic film and documentary, recorded by tourists and locals), for different purposes. So given the variety of occasions, purposes, and media involved in the above, referring to theatre and dance as essential objects is largely meaningless.

An alternative approach would require, then, a theoretical framework that centres on practice. Using Hobart's definition, by 'practices' I mean 'those recognized, complex forms of social activity and articulation, through which agents set out to maintain or change themselves, others and the world about them under varying conditions. Such an account is deliberately open and problematizes *inter alia* what it is to articulate, to recognize as, or to ascribe agency' (2010b: 63). Recognition implies recognizing or representing something *as* something else. The crucial point, then, is that '[p]ractices are not natural objects in the world' (Hobart 2010b: 63 n.18) but representations. The notion of practice, in other words, is taken as 'a frame of reference we use to interrogate a complex reality' (Hobart 2010b: 62).

I argue that a focus on practices, and especially on practice as a frame of reference (cross-ref. 28), is particularly appropriate for this study which, as outlined in the introduction, argues that most treatments of theatre in Bali have thus far consisted of a confusion between a substantive and a metaphor, both of which can be bypassed if we look, instead, at what Balinese do and say about what they do. In addition, the analysis of Bali by various scholars

(H. Geertz 1991, 1994; Hobart 2000; Fox 2011) suggests that Balinese commonly work with a highly practice-oriented model of the world. This means that what is needed is an approach that gives due cognizance to Balinese ways of talking about their own performances and acknowledges how they do so without pre-translating it into alien terms. At the same time, this approach must be reasonably translatable in a way that the inevitable transformation that ensues is recognizable and retains as much as possible of the integrity of the *discours*²² involved, without sacrificing the theoretical rigour required for a critical academic analysis.

For the reasons outlined above, here I draw on Peirce's (1955) pragmatist ontology and his notions of firsts, seconds, and thirds. Firsts I take to be whatever is available to experience. Seconds are relationships between firsts, while thirds are relationships between seconds, i.e. relationships between relationships, as well as the conditions of possibility of relations, and so of firsts as well (Peirce 1955: 75-59). In the Introduction, I defined the object of study as a relationship between practices, that is the relationship between practices of studying, recording, making, and watching Balinese performance. However, can any of these practices be taken as a first, or an object the mode of being of which 'consists in its subject's being positively such as it is regardless of aught else' (Peirce 1955: 76)? Arguably, all practices are relational, because they involve someone doing something for some purpose, aimed at changing or perpetuating some state or condition. So Peirce's notion of thirds may be useful in studying the relationship between these relational practices. For Peirce, Thirdness is 'the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other' (1966: 221). Thirds, in other words, are how Balinese frame, understand, and interpret such relationships, and as such stands on a precisely equivalent basis to what scholars do in studying them.

²² I use the term *discours* to refer to that non-stable, historically situated domain of contact between language and experience that is not confined to texts or utterances (Foucault 1972) and to differentiate it from the casual use of 'discourse' as verbal exchange or conversation.

It may be rather self-evident that a practice such as performing in a group is necessarily relational, as it presupposes interaction among the group members. So, in order to explore the idea of performance as a relational practice, let me consider the extreme case of a Balinese *Topèng Pajegan*, which consists of a *single* actor or dancer performing a number of characters (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 65). Is this a relationship, if the performer is alone? The term that Balinese use for what the performer does on this occasion is *masolah* (A) or *ngigel* (B). The verb *masolah* is related to the root *solah*, which can roughly be translated as conduct; but conduct and action are always *to* someone, and this is where audiences become significant, especially in extemporized genres, which would include much of Balinese performance. However, I picked the case of *Topèng Pajegan* because a live, human audience is neither strictly necessary, nor its primary addressee. Performers insist (cross-ref. 216-219) that there are always unseen, *niskala*, recipients to which their performances are offered. An audience is, in other words, always already presupposed. This description bears striking parallels to Bakhtin's approach to utterances:

If one plays close attention to tone, another constitutive feature of the utterance comes into view. We have seen that all utterances presuppose and require a listener, a 'second person' (however many of them there may be [...]). The utterance counts on and is shaped by the second person's responsive understanding. But in addition to this second person, there is also a third person for every utterance, whom Bakhtin calls the 'superaddressee' (Morson & Emerson 1990: 135).

In this sense, at least one audience, present or imagined, is presupposed in any practice that involves utterance, making it inherently relational.

How might a Bakhtinian approach to performance be relevant to the analysis of Balinese theatre? If theatre is some kind of unproblematic positivity that requires no questioning of its ontology, purposes or context, then perhaps such an inquiry is unnecessary. If, however, a critical study of Balinese theatre involves consideration of the intentions of the various participants and the cultural context of their understandings, then *prima facie* it is

relevant. Furthermore, the whole issue of relational approaches would seem to deserve attention, questions about which will form one of the core themes explored in Part Two.

Such an inquiry also brings to the fore the need to take audiences, as well as the wider contexts and circumstances of performances, into account in any attempt to approach performance as a practice, and invites the question of how audiences have been approached by theatre scholars up till now. It also gives reason to address the object of study as a case of Peircean Thirdness, that is a relationship between relationships, and the ways Balinese represent and articulate these. Peirce associated Thirdness with both mediation and representation.²³ Arguably, one can only represent something *as* something else, on an occasion, for a purpose, with an outcome (Goodman 1976: 27-31; elaborated by Hobart 2008: 12-13). So representation is a practice that cannot be separated from what it describes, and reference to what it describes is impossible without representation and mediation. The implication is that everything is always already represented.

The above serves to clarify that my purpose here is not to engage in yet another semiotic analysis of performance in Bali. I would argue that such seemingly neutral analyses are anything but. This goes back to the issue of double discursivity as a source of unrecognized hegemony, because approaches that rest on neutrality and objectivity fail to acknowledge the conditions under which they take place; a recognition of these conditions would require accounting for analysis as a practice. Any semiotic analysis presupposes some account of the relationship between signs and referents, which are arguably culturally and historically specific, but generally presented as uncontroversially universal (Todorov 1982). Also, such an account would pre-empt Balinese ideas about what performances do (rather than just unproblematically ‘mean’), let alone their uses of notions of meaning, or how words, images and actions work. My aim is different. Treating the object of study as a

²³ The ‘Category of the Third is the Idea of that which is such as it is as being a Third, or Medium, between a Second and its First. That is to say, it is *Representation* as an element of the Phenomenon’ (Peirce 1974: 47).

relationship between relational practices allows me to consider aspects of mediation and representation that would remain unavailable to analysis should the relevant elements be taken as positivities. So what does a relational approach contribute to current studies of audiences, and why might it be singularly suitable? To answer this, one must first ask: how have theatre audiences been studied thus far?

The Problem of Spectators, Audiences, Publics and Viewers

I have argued earlier that practices of watching cannot be separated from practices of performing, commenting, and mediating, and that a treatment of audiences in particular should be central to relational approaches to performance. So, in this section, I shall address the question of how several theatre scholars and practitioners have imagined and represented, and the assumptions on which such representations are based. What are audiences claimed to be, and what are they for? Subsequently, I shall attempt to trace alternative ways to treat audiences, drawing on Media Studies.

The Italian theatre director and theorist Eugenio Barba, in an essay entitled ‘Four Spectators’ (1990), has drawn a distinction between ‘spectators’ and ‘the public,’ favouring the first: ‘What does it mean to work keeping the spectators in mind but not the public? The public ordains success or failure; that is, something which has to do with breadth. The spectators, in their uniqueness, determine that which has to do with depth—they determine to what extent the performance has taken root in certain individual memories’ (Barba 1990: 96). Barba here defined performance in relational terms, as ‘individual memories’ are described as the sole medium through which theatre can surpass its ‘ephemeral nature’ (1990: 96). However, on closer inspection, Barba’s ‘four spectators’ turn out to be imaginary spectators—that is Barba’s imagination of ideal spectator-types:

It is necessary to assume the way of reacting of at least three spectators and to know how to imagine a fourth. I call these four 'basic' spectators:

- the child who perceives the actions literally;
- the spectator who thinks s/he doesn't understand but who, in spite of her/himself, dances;
- the director's alter ego;
- the fourth spectator who sees *through* the performance as if it did not belong to the world of the ephemeral and of fiction (Barba 1990: 99).

What 'theatre' refers to here remains vague. In addition, how do Barba's categories work for dance and other media? How might it fit other forms of spectating, for instance religious ceremonies? The answer to these questions would necessitate contextualizing spectating and approaching it as one of various situated, performance-related practices. Instead, the category of the 'spectator' for Barba has little, if anything, to do with any actual spectator in any social or cultural context of viewing, or the practices of engaging with a performance (which might encompass a range of activities not limited to watching or commenting), and primarily to do with an idealized account of theatre-making notions such as acting and directing. The 'spectator' here is a representation (as), not one of the subjects of a practice but a tool for another.

One of the first works that dealt directly with the subject was Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences*, published in 1990 and revised in 1997. Bennett repeatedly noted the lack of theorization about audiences:

[W]e lack any detailed picture of the theatre audience and, in particular their role(s) in the production-reception relationship. The extensive criticism of reader-response theorists has not achieved a codification of reading practice, but it has made us more aware of the complexity of a process once considered 'natural'. Similarly the recent energies of theatre semiotics have not resulted in a codification of the elements of theatrical practice, but have established the multiplicity of signifying systems involved and the audience's role of decoding these systems in combination and simultaneously. Neither theories of reading nor theatre semiotics, however, goes far beyond the issues facing an apparently individual subjectivity. Neither takes much notice of reception as a politically implicated act. Indeed, the relationship between production and reception, positioned within and

against cultural values, remains largely uninvestigated. Yet all art forms rely on those cultural values for their existence and, among them, theatre is an obviously social phenomenon. It is an event which relies on the physical presence of an audience to confirm its cultural status (1997: 86).

Although Bennett recognized that audiences had to that point been remarkably ignored and understudied (see also Freshwater 2009), what is striking about this passage is how far the notions of ‘culture’ and theatre or dance are essentialized and universalized, while the model of production and reception is presented as a fundamental, if not the only possible, polarity. In the revised edition of the book, Bennett added a chapter titled ‘Spectatorship Across Culture’ (in the singular), in which she considered ‘issues of spectatorship when the theatrical product does not coincide to a substantial degree with the cultural education and practice of the audience’ (1997: 166). Culture and the relationships involved in theatrical practices remained, however, the same essences that they were taken to be throughout the book.

So, in this account culture is still an unproblematized positivity. It is far from a Cultural Studies’ appreciation of culture itself being essentially contested and a site—or occasions—of struggle. It is only the ‘product’ that changes, this time drawing on ‘so-called “alien” or “foreign” cultures’ and theatrical ‘Other(s)’ (Bennett 1997: 166), without these ‘Others’ ever being considered as potential audiences or as people engaged in this process in any way other than a ‘source’ from which forms of performance can, with varying degrees of political correctness, be derived.

In a potentially interesting move, Bennett argued that ‘among other things, the performance from a non-Western culture sheds light on what, precisely, is Western about the conditions of both reception and production environments’ (1997: 168). Unfortunately the subsequent discussion is exhausted in an overview of the debates around and critique of the implicit Orientalism of intercultural performance. The ‘conditions of reception and

production' in the West are reified and naturalized, as is 'the West' itself, to such an extent that they escape any possibility of analysis. The problem of turning practice into an abstract process, as opposed to a series of complex and situated moments is that, while practices are researchable, abstracts are not. Ultimately, extending criticisms to 'the "Orientalist" work of Ariane Mnouchkine with the Théâtre du Soleil' (Bennett 1997: 196), Bennett called for a more thoughtful mode of spectatorship: 'If as spectators we insist on seeing only, here, the Orient, we lose sight of the very determined efforts in Mnouchkine's work to destabilize Eurocentric theatre with a more fluid and interactive production-reception process' (1997: 197). She then remarked that '[t]he questions raised by the analysis of spectatorship for intercultural theatre have [...] a usefulness for our understanding of any kind of production-reception contract' (Bennett 1997: 201). However, the industrial model of production and reception remained the ultimate frame of reference within which any engagement with audiences and theatre can take place. Even when Bennett considered occasions '[w]here audiences are consulted and involved in the structuring of the theatrical event, and are encouraged (at least in the immediate post-production period) to translate their reading of that event into action' (Bennett 1997: 207), the possible outcomes were limited to the same model of production and reception, only this time the 'process acts bi-directionally in broader cultural perspectives' (Bennett 1997: 207). The model is still in place, limiting the possibilities of engagement with performance to the few pre-determined by the scholar, while the idea of the performance as a text to be read, which will form a large part of the discussion in Chapter Five of this thesis, is taken as natural and self-evident. In addition, the industrial model of production and reception is significant because, as I shall argue in Part Two of the thesis, most of Balinese dance is now produced on industrial lines, as is much of Balinese art.

Despite the limitations of Bennett's approach, her remarks on the lack of serious scholarship on theatre audiences were valid. More recent approaches range from the

extremely personal, artistic description of the experience of spectatorship (Phelan 2004) to the far end of quantitative research (Davis and Emeljanow 2001), with an emphasis on cognitive science (McConachie 2008). Bruce McConachie, in particular, attempted to derive universal conclusions drawing from a culturally and historically-specific mode of theatre-going while ignoring divisions of race, class, gender, and so forth based on the human species' shared biology. Significantly, the 'engagement' in *Engaging Audiences* (McConachie 2008), involved taking into consideration models of spectators' brains, but not anything spectators might have to say.

On the other hand, Jacques Rancière's essay 'The Emancipated Spectator' (2004) presented an interesting case, as it called for a re-evaluation of notions and assumptions about spectatorship, such as the equation of audiences with passivity and therefore of viewing as inherently negative (2009 [2004]: 12). Rancière called for 'spectators who play the role of active interpreters, who develop their own translation in order to appropriate the "story" and make it their own story. An emancipated community is a community of narrators and translators' (Rancière 2009 [2004]: 22). However, assumptions about community and about performance being a text to be translated aside, Rancière's 'radical' attempt to disconnect passivity from spectatorship is, as I shall argue shortly, hardly a new move in audience research in Media Studies. In addition, even though there is now a plethora of studies about audience involvement in immersive and participatory styles of performance (e.g. Kattwinkel 2003; G. White 2013), these tend to focus on forms of theatre that cast spectators in a role different to that of a 'conventional audience' (however contested and historicized), and so avoid the radical questioning or reconsideration of audiences as objects of study.²⁴

²⁴ There is also a crucial difference between being active and being an agent. In what sense, or under what conditions, do spectators or viewers become partly agents in a performance? Insofar as the performance is determined by others, their only scope is in what they do with what they see in a way that matters. For instance, to what extent and in what ways does silent disagreement constitute agency? Conversely, a lack of visible activity does not necessarily constitute passivity or lack of agency: for instance, as I shall argue in later chapters (cross-ref. 218), much of what invisible forces (*niskala*), but also people in powerful positions, are supposed to

Helena Grehan, in a similar line of thought, explored the idea of ‘active spectatorship,’ in the sense that spectators ‘can become intrigued, engaged, and involved in a process of consideration about the important issues of response and responsibility and what these might mean both within and beyond the performance space’ (2009: 5), particularly in relation to intercultural performance. For example, she offered a nuanced analysis of the ethical complexities of Mnouchkine’s work, which she described as ‘one that is informed by a deep ethico-political commitment to the subjects and histories represented’ (Grehan 2009: 123) and which provides a space ‘for careful and detailed responses to the global refugee crisis’ (Grehan 2009: 137). She argued that the work allowed multiple, complicated and contradictory reactions, ranging from voyeuristic, orientalist pleasures (Gilbert and Lo 2007: 205) to a desire to spring to action (Grehan 2009: 137). She placed particular emphasis on ‘what spectators do’ with such performances (Grehan 2009: 8), and on how audience ‘responses, during and after the performance, liberate (or have the potential to liberate) certain kinds of ethical challenges for spectators as citizens in the wider world’ (Grehan 2009: 6). In order to address this, she recognized the inadequacy of traditionally employed methodologies, such as surveys and observation of audience reactions (applause, silences and so on, the significance of which can only be ascribed by the analyst), and opted to ‘address a range of responses’ to performances in order ‘to provide the reader with an understanding of the ways in which a process of ethical reflection can liberate a range of nuanced, often contradictory and powerful readings of contemporary performance work for spectators’ (Grehan 2009: 5).

However, Grehan stated that ‘spectatorship must be understood as including the responses of individual citizens or subjects who go to the theatre to be challenged and who keep going back because of theatre’s capacity to awaken and stimulate reflection on

do in a Balinese performance is to simply attend and ‘witness’ it (*nyaksinin*). However, the act of witnessing is not passive, as it involves assuming ultimate responsibility for what happens (Hobart 1990: 107-120).

important topics and themes' (2009: 4). So she takes as a starting point the unacknowledged assumption of subjectivity, and without considering what being an 'individual citizen or subject' entails across different intersections of class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. Grehan examined performances that engage 'spectators overtly on specific political issues to do with race, culture, oppression and belonging' (2009: 70), but ignored these issues in her definition of spectators. In addition, because of the aforementioned difficulties in gauging audience reaction, the evidence she provided consisted entirely of her own reactions and interpretation of the performances she analyzed, as well as those of other experts (critics and theatre scholars) who wrote and published about them, i.e. a particular kind of spectator with a special kind of (vested?) interest in commentary and, potentially, a certain amount of power that non-experts lack. She insisted that she was writing about spectators who take physical action (Grehan 2009: 19) and exhibit 'embodied response[s]' (Grehan 2009: 78), when, in fact, she was talking about representations of audiences extrapolated from herself and a select few experts who were able to articulate their responses to intercultural performance from a particular kind of position.

So, overall, despite the apparent proliferation of studies about theatre audiences in recent years, critical engagement with the subject is scarce; audiences still remain remarkably under-theorized, their presence taken as evidence in itself (Barba 1992; Phelan 1993; Varney & Fensham 2000), while these arguments consistently take the form of claims about 'the average spectator,' a notion which alludes, in its generalizing, to the nineteenth-century idea of 'the average man' (Hacking 1999). As Ian Hacking noted, such an entity is a deliberately statistical abstraction, which corresponds to no actual person. But why do we need to question this dismissal of the audience in the first place?

On the one hand, several European theatre practitioners have taken audiences to be indispensable to theatre. This concern with the audience was most prominent in the 1960s:

Peter Handke in his play *Offending the Audience* (1966) addressed the spectators directly and declared: ‘You are the topic. [...] You are the centre. You are the occasion. You are the reasons why’ (1997 [1966]: 21). In the same time period, Jerzy Grotowski famously asked: ‘Can theatre exist without an audience?’ (1968: 32) and replied that ‘theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, and so forth. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, “live” communion’ (1968: 19) and stated that ‘[a]t least one spectator is needed to make it a performance’ (1968: 32). The choice of ‘communion’ is significant, because it suggests a model of communication that eliminates the medium, or at least treats it as transparent, and represents communication as an immediate ‘sharing of inner experience’ or as ‘contact between interiorities’ (Peters 1999: 8-9).

Responding to similar issues, in the same year, Peter Brook²⁵ wrote: ‘A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged’ (1968: 11) and ‘[t]he only thing that all forms of theatre have in common is the need for an audience’ (1968: 154). This is arguably not exclusive to, and so not a definition, of theatre; however, the question of whether or not this applies to other media, such as film and television, fell outside of Brook’s concerns. Since then, discussions of the centrality of audiences have shifted towards an emphasis on the togetherness that characterizes theatrical events on such accounts: for instance, Lone Twin theatre company defined theatre as ‘people together doing something’ (D. Williams and Lavery 2011: 27) on a ‘shared encounter’ (D. Williams and Lavery 2011: 13); Tim Etchells, the director of Forced Entertainment performance ensemble, drew attention to togetherness in theatre and performance, ‘in the sense that we’re aware of the temporary and shifting bonds that link us both to the stage and to our fellow watchers’ (2007: 26); while the work of Punchdrunk

²⁵ Brook and Grotowski had met for the first time in 1965, when Grotowski went to England to attend Barba’s wedding and a lecture was organized for him in London (Barba 1999: 145). All three practitioners had an on-going relationship since then.

theatre company is centred around audience participation, offering spectators ‘strange encounters with their work’ (C. White 2009: 219). So there is a contradiction between the lack of rigour in critical engagement with audiences as an object of study and the repeated description of theatre by European practitioners as a relationship between an actor and an audience.

Valentin Volosinov argued that ‘[a]ny true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. [...] Meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding’ (1973: 102). I am using the term ‘dialogue’ here in its Bakhtinian sense (or rather, in Morson and Emerson’s translations and reading of Bakhtin). To put it (perhaps too) simply, dialogue is the ongoing process of communication (Morson & Emerson 1990: 50), while ‘[l]ife by its very nature is dialogic’ (Bakhtin cited in Morson & Emerson 1990: 60). If practitioners and theorists so widely recognize the dialogic character of utterances in this broad sense, and performance as inherently relational, it follows that the study of audiences should be central. On the other hand, the many frames of reference used in different studies of ‘the audience’ have attached the term to so many different referents (as a rule ambiguous and underdetermined by evidence), and so much theorizing about it has consisted in slippage between uses, that the term itself has become vacuous—an empty signifier in support of any argument.

In an effort to explore this problem, Dennis Kennedy’s *The Spectator and the Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (2009) started with the recognition that ‘a spectator is a corporeal presence but a slippery concept’ (2009: 3). Even though the author comes from a Theatre Studies background and much of the book is devoted to the performance and reception Shakespeare’s plays, Kennedy utilized different methods and approaches from a range of disciplines, including Media Studies (Fiske 1987; Ang 1991), in

order to address ‘the intellectual trouble that audiences bring’ (Kennedy 2009: 4) in a wide array of cultural practices not limited to theatre. This effort took the shape of a historical overview of the general reactions of and towards audiences (hostility, didacticism, intention to agitate) at turning points in theatre history, such as the rise of the director in Europe, how World War II shaped theatre productions and audiences, and the development of the avant-garde.

Generally, Kennedy was ‘more concerned with the philosophic issues that spectators raise than with their specific experiences’ (2009: 4), which is, in my opinion, one of the strengths of this study: it refused to treat audiences as objects independent of the practices in which they are involved and the contexts in which they are situated. Kennedy was forced, in a sense, to treat audiences as representations (without expressly using the concept of representation) and so to focus on theatre-makers’, critics’ and scholars’ attitudes and commentaries about them.

However, this approach was not consistent: when Kennedy tried to address ‘the spectator experience’ (2009: 112), he admitted that it was impossible to refer to anything but his own and those he suspected other people might have had. Part of this problem is the fact that people who attend a performance cannot usefully be described merely as ‘spectators,’ because they are situated in social, historical, and political contexts and informed by whole constellations of past experiences which include, but are not limited to, every other performance they have been part of in any capacity. Kennedy recognized this: ‘We hesitate to speak on this elusive topic because we understand that audiences are pluralistic, that gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, education, health and age all condition reaction. We understand that when grouped as an audience spectators do not make up a unitary psyche but respond to the same event in highly individual and sometimes idiosyncratic ways’ (2009: 188).

One solution to this problem would be to acknowledge that once people are grouped together *as* an audience, they become something else: a representation (by someone, to someone, on an occasion, for a purpose, with an outcome). Kennedy proposed another: ‘Given the difficulty of analysing actual responses, we are not likely to solve the conundrum soon or with the methods currently available. But we might learn a little more by turning the problem around slightly, to ask questions about how the emotions of spectators are constructed or manipulated by different types of performance, and especially how arousal is encouraged, discouraged or tolerated’ (Kennedy 2009: 188). This is an effective move, because it breaks a complex issue down into its constituent practices. However, I would argue that the question should not be ‘how are the emotions of spectators constructed or manipulated’ but, instead, ‘who has claimed to construct the emotions of whom, as what, when, for what purpose?’

Kennedy also acknowledged a deeper problem with performance analysis, including how theatre scholars usually approach audiences:

most analysis of performance supposes a semiotic configuration, with speaking subjects on stage (the transmitters) and more-or-less silent objects in the audience (the receivers). Even when the author is well aware of the indeterminacy and multiplicity of signifiers and the ungraspable shape of what they might signify, and attentive to the reciprocity of communication and the possibility of spectator resistance, it is difficult to discuss elements of any type of performance without recourse to a sender-receiver model. [...] The semiotic formula, which considers performance as an action by doers for watchers, has been at the heart of the social and financial contract that normally obtains between actors and audience. Certainly I have never managed to evade the inference that, whatever else they do, spectators read signs, especially when dealing with processes of the visual (Kennedy 2009: 11-12).

Here Kennedy attempted to complicate the transmission model of communication (cross-ref. 37), but admitted that he could not escape it.²⁶ This is something that I shall try to investigate and pick apart in the second part of the thesis, not only based on what Kennedy pinpoints as the problem of semiotics, i.e. that it posits ‘an ideal spectator as reader’ (2009: 12), to which he counter-proposes the spectator’s individuality, but on the very idea of reading performance as text (cross-ref. 182-187) and its implications.

Other Ways of Imagining Audiences

With his effort to approach spectators in a more critical manner, Kennedy (2009) opened up the possibility of interrogating the notion of theatre audiences in unexpected ways, drawing from theories outside the confines of Theatre Studies. Granted the importance attributed to audiences in Media Studies, I wish here to explore the possibility and the limits of engaging the literature on media audiences in order to examine how we might address theatre audiences in Bali and to argue the need for an ethnographic study of performance-related practices.

Media Studies scholars have proposed several critical approaches: In rejecting the ‘hypodermic needle’ or ‘magic bullet’ model of media communication mentioned earlier (cross-ref. 38), Morley focused on what audiences make of what they watch, stressing the idea that the ‘preferred reading’ (1992: 65) of a ‘text’²⁷ does not always match that of the audience. Morley therefore suggested that the success of mass mediated communication may be measured by ‘the extent to which decodings take place within the limits of the preferred (or dominant) manner in which the message has been initially encoded’ (1992: 86). To this

²⁶ Hall, in ‘Encoding/Decoding’ (1980), tried to bypass the constitutive metaphor of transmission, but ultimately remained attached to the idea of ‘code,’ and so to the essentialist dichotomy between form and meaning (Hobart 2005: 31). I shall attempt to elaborate on this idea by means of exploring what Balinese do with performance practices in due course (cross-ref. 122, 185, 237-246).

²⁷ The term ‘text’ is uncritically extended to apply to any medium, including films and television programmes, while this intended meaning itself is presumably coherent and pre-articulated.

end, he proposed an ethnographic study of audiences, suggesting that one can effectively study audiences if one is careful and critical: '[A]n action such as the viewing of television needs to be understood within the structure and dynamics of the domestic process of consumption of which it is but a part' (Morley 1992: 173). However, the idea of 'consumption' treats media as expendable substances (i.e. products) and represents viewers primarily as consumers, which arguably replicates another 'preferred reading' of media communication itself.

In a more nuanced line of thought, Ang argued that the "television audience" only exists as an imaginary entity, an abstraction constructed from the vantage point of the institutions, in the interest of the institutions' (1991: 2). In this way, Ang rejected the idea that 'the television audience' is an ontological given, and viewed it, instead, as 'a socially-constituted and institutionally-produced category' (1991: 3). Even though Ang focused on disentangling Morley-type ethnographic studies of audience practices from the institutional perspective on audiences, she asserted that the institutional point of view is a hindrance to 'alternative understandings of television audiencehood, developed from a perspective that displays sensitivity to the everyday *practices and experiences of actual audiences themselves*' (1991: 3; emphasis added).

Hartley subsequently questioned the very existence of 'actual audiences' that Ang did not entirely dismiss. Hartley focused on 'the institutions that construct television discursively,' in which he included 'the television industry (networks, stations, producers, etc.); political/legal institutions (usually formalized as regulatory bodies, and intermittently as government-sponsored inquiries and reports); and critical institutions (Academic, journalistic and—surprisingly rarely—self-constituted audience organizations or pressure groups)' (1992: 105). Having stressed the discursive aspect of audiences, he argued that

audiences are not just constructs; they are the invisible fictions that are produced institutionally [...]. Audiences may be imagined

empirically, theoretically or politically, but in all cases the product is a fiction that serves the need of the imagining institution. In no case is the audience ‘real’, or external to its discursive construction. There is no ‘actual’ audience that lies beyond its production as a category, which is merely to say that audiences are only ever encountered *per se* as *representations* (Hartley 1992: 105).

To which one should add, as I argued above, that someone is always representing audiences as something, to someone, on an occasion, for a purpose. So what is at issue?

Nightingale continued this line of thought on the discursive aspect of the audience, arguing that it is ‘knowable only through the power of analogies we use to describe it and generate information about it’ (1996: 126) and subsequently provided a way out of this dead-end, suggesting that if the audience cannot be usefully examined as a positive object or substance, it may be treated as a relationship. Addressing the issue of representing as, Hobart argued that ‘[a]udiences do not exist purely in themselves as measurable objects [...] independent of the frameworks used to study them’ (2010: 203). He suggested that the audience should be seen as a third-order notion, a relationship between relationships, i.e. ‘the relationship in terms of each of the parties or elements [involved] (so at least two) and as framed by an observer or analyst’ (Hobart 2009: 3, drawing on Peirce 1955; cross-ref. 41). My object of study can therefore be rephrased as a relationship of actors and spectators, mediated in part *via* notions of text and performance. This object is not a positivity and can, in effect, only be approached through a study of the practices by way of which such relationships are asserted, elaborated, questioned or denied. As audiences cannot usefully be studied independent of enunciations made about them, in giving up audiences as simple positivities, one is not giving up altogether. On the contrary, representations involve power and knowledge. They do something. So what audiences are and do is not separable from the circumstances under which they are represented *as*—crucially a question of who does the representing, to whom, and for what purpose.

Goodman's and Hobart's argument about the situated nature of representation, and so of the representation of audiences or of audiences *as* representations, suggests that it is impossible to study the practice of representing audiences without ethnography (Goodman 1976: 27-31; Hobart 2008: 12-13). Hobart, arguing the case for treating audiences as relational practices, challenged the positivism inherent in most accounts of audiences, by proposing that the idea of 'the audience' holds a position parallel to that of 'the people' in Laclau's account: its status as an 'empty signifier' is obscured by discursive-institutional attempts to fix its meaning (Hobart 2010: 201; Laclau 2005: 102-07). On this kind of critical approach, to investigate Balinese audiences, either of live performance or television, would be a double impossibility, because what it means to be Balinese is also subject to articulation, not insignificantly *via* the route of imagining and addressing 'the Balinese' as audiences, i.e. as a mass undifferentiated category. In this sense, the success or failure of the constitution and articulation of totalities such as society, 'the audience,' 'the Balinese' and so forth, to a large extent depends on the way these are 'mediated' (Hobart 2010b).

That does not, however, entail that audiences are unresearchable. The study of audiences in Bali becomes a study of a site of contestation and antagonism, of the various ways audiences are articulated and represented. The issue shifts from decontextualized representations to include who did the representing and under what circumstances. Articulations and representations, though, do not exist in a vacuum—ontologically, they are nothing but practices in particular occasions and contexts. It seems, then, that there is a large number of questions that have been collapsed into a single term, which is thereby misleading. There are quite distinct issues. In this sense I argue that it is informative to treat audiences, as much as specific modes of Balinese performance, as situated practices.

Relational models, as well as any approach that questions audiences as unproblematically measurable entities, are useful precisely because they do not commit the

analyst precipitately to positivities, nor to there being a single ‘true’ interpretation, the analyst’s task being to decide which is the case. What they do commit one to is the fact that there can be no single true position or interpretation from which to understand the relationship, as it ultimately depends on the frames of reference of the various participants (not just actors or audiences, but filmmakers, broadcasters, and academic commentators) as well as on the circumstances under which and the practices through which these are constituted. The aim of the research is therefore to investigate these relationships as they are differently conceived by the various parties involved, without considering them as substances (cross-ref. 91) independent of the circumstances of their instantiation or exemplification. This approach roots the research in practice, which includes the practices of those doing the representing, because, unless one introduces unconscious structures (which at once monopolizes and hierarchizes knowledge in favour of the analyst), studying extemporized theatre without reference to these relationships and their contingencies is next to impossible.

The various issues are further complicated if we consider practices of recording and televising theatre, with the subsequent reduplication of ‘the audience’: on the one hand, the audience of the performance at the time of its recording (which can take the form of both a live audience or potentially of a Bakhtinian ‘superaddressee’ in studio recordings [Morson & Emerson 1990: 135-36]) and on the other hand the television audience of the broadcast programme.

So further questions arise. How has recording changed the working models of communication by which actors in Bali operate? To what extent have assumptions about the audience shaped their practices? How do producers and actors imagine and talk about these audiences? And how might televising impact upon the various models of communication?

What is a Monologue For?

So far I have argued that current approaches tend to misrepresent practices as essences. They also consistently ignore mediation and its implications, or indeed the possibility of it being partly constitutive of one's object of study. A critical approach that centres on practice aims to contextualize representation as an assemblage of varying practices and to refute the idea of unmediated performance, which is a fantasy by virtue of it being impossible to describe without mediating and representing it *as*. In addition, representations are always *to* someone, and so inherently relational, while, as I argued earlier, any utterance is necessarily dialogic (Volosinov 1973). According to Bakhtin, existing epistemologies turn knowledge into a monologue by transforming the open-endedness of dialogue into a monologic summary of the world's contents that inevitably misrepresents 'its unfinalizable spirit' (Morson & Emerson 1990: 60). But what are monologues for, and what are the alternatives?

Bakhtin argued that '[t]he dialogue of life requires a dialogic method and a dialogic conception of truth to represent it' (Morson & Emerson 1990: 60). This account of truth fits Balinese performance well because of its extemporized character, and so stresses the fact that a sensible choice of theory enables the researcher to reduce the inevitable degree of incommensurability between the two *discours*. It seems also particularly compatible with the practice-oriented model of the world with which Balinese tend to work by almost any account (H. Geertz 1991, 1994; Hobart 2000; Fox 2011), given that practices are relational and, as such, inherently dialogic. This also serves to examine the issues involved critically, by contrasting the dialogic interaction of practice with the 'official monologism' and 'ready-made truth' (Bakhtin cited in Morson & Emerson 1990: 60) of current approaches. '[I]n Bakhtin's view, such a concept of truth is missing from modern Western thought' (Morson & Emerson 1990: 60). Or rather, it was missing at the time. Cultural Studies has taken culture as the conditions under which social divisions like class, gender and race are articulated,

naturalized, represented and contested—in this way, together with Foucault's *discours*, Cultural Studies and the study of practices may present the alternative that Bakhtin felt was missing.

Arguably, the idea of dialogue may start to address the essentialism involved in many studies of theatre and dance in Bali, but also more generally. For Bakhtin, dialogue was fundamentally opposed to what he called 'theoretism,' that is, the tendency to understand events in terms of underlying rules or overarching structures; in this way, 'theoretism thinks away the "eventness" of events' (Morson & Emerson 1990: 50), and summarizes the problems of approaching, for example, extemporized theatre as a playing-out of unconscious structures. In other words, it overlooks or attempts to tame the messy and unruly openness of events and their unfinalizability. This also brings to the fore the potential antagonism between the distinct roles (academic, government official, practitioner, informant) that Balinese are often called to assume. Theory emerges as a totalizing structure premised on closure, turning dialogue into a monologue, or, as Laclau argued, 'the fixation of meaning' (1990: 92). Interestingly, Hall argued that this finalization is precisely what is needed to put an event into words, to narrativize it in order to turn it into a story to be communicated *via* the media (1980: 129). How would this reflect on researchers' attempts to describe and analyze Balinese performance, or on Balinese attempting to explain their own practices to an eager international academic and performance circuit?

Interestingly, though, on Bakhtin's account, no sooner is something apparently finalized that it becomes open and unfinalized again (Morson & Emerson 1990: 36-49). In this sense, Bakhtin's dialogic and open-ended world is of a kind incommensurable with authoritative utterance. Objective news, grand-narratives—and indeed most academic writing—are then by default biased, ranging from contingent to hegemonic and constitutive. Perhaps what scholarship has done to Bali could be described as creating a monologue out of

a dialogue on European terms. Hobart noted that the argument for the inevitability of Eurocentrism in addressing other people's practices is implicitly elitist and narcissistic (2006). It is also bad manners and ignores the 'long history of discussion, argument and reflection about Asian media' (Hobart 2006: 498). Following Hobart, I draw particular attention to acts of commentary, especially by actors, members of the audience in live performances, and the media industry, not in an attempt to get to the 'authentic native voice' but to recognize the practices involved in their plurality and underdetermination. It is important to note, however, that '[t]here is no clearly discriminable class of phenomena [...] called commentary. Rather it is a complex set of practices involv[ing] a relationship between particular performers, performances, referents, audiences, occasions and purposes' (Hobart 2001: 9). Commentary is, to put it in Bakhtinian terms, what can turn attempts at a monologue into a dialogue.

In the Introduction I suggested that writings about theatre in Bali, from Mead and Bateson, to C. Geertz, and from, as I shall argue, rather simplistic readings of Antonin Artaud to Schechner and Turner, comprised such a closed and narrow account that it might actually be considered as a monologue rather than a dialogue, in that it never engaged with Balinese accounts. What is involved in Geertz's claim that the nineteenth-century Balinese state 'was always pointed not toward tyranny, whose systematic concentration of power it was incompetent to effect, and not even very methodically toward government, which it pursued indifferently and hesitantly, but rather toward *spectacle*, toward *ceremony*, toward the *public dramatization* of the ruling obsessions of Balinese *culture*' (Geertz 1980a: 13; emphases added)? I shall explore this in detail in the next chapter, but I would like, for now, to focus on the notion of 'spectacle,' which, as I hinted in the Introduction, has no single usage in English. John MacAloon described spectacle as a framework which can contain festivals, rituals, and play (1984). For Guy Debord, it was 'a social relationship between people that is

mediated by images. [...]It is the very heart of society's real unreality' (1994 [1967]: 12-13). Perhaps, combining Debord with Laclau's understanding of society (1990), spectacle may be approached as a means through which claims to totality are made. As such, spectacle on Geertz's account can more accurately describe his own contribution to the issue insofar as it articulated Bali in a certain way (and silenced all other accounts), rather than whatever it is Balinese were doing.

So what have the various studies of Bali and Balinese culture, theatre, dance, and so forth been saying, on what occasions, *via* what media, with what purposes and outcomes? And how have Balinese and other Indonesians engaged with these representations? Theatre is often represented as a self-evident part of Balinese culture, easily identifiable and useful in describing the essence of a place (the 'snug little amphitheatre' [cross-ref. 15], where 'these so-called primitive people [are found] to be inherently artistic. For centuries they have made a cult of beauty' [Yates 1933: 62]) and a people (whose dance became a mirror for character, and a key 'to the whole pattern of their culture' [Holt and Bateson 1944: 55]). As such, it is intricately connected to issues that go beyond Bali altogether, as they deal with the presumed universality and common origins of theatrical expression (cross-ref. Chapters Three and Four). What has representing theatre and Bali in this way accomplished for the various agents and instruments of representation? Are such representations simply dismissible as modes of legitimization of colonial and later regimes of truth and power, or is the issue more complex than that?

When is Theatre?

Once Balinese theatre and dance, or indeed Balinese culture, are taken not to be essences, but representations, which in turn hinge on mediation, asking *what* Balinese theatre

is seems largely nonsensical.²⁸ So, following Goodman's re-conceptualization of the question 'what is art?' as 'when is art?' (1978: 66-67), in this thesis I ask instead: when is Balinese theatre? By extension, we might also ask: when is the audience (and according to whom, for what discernible purposes, under what circumstances)? As the notional unmediated live performance, which the knowing subject experiences and can impart to others directly, is a limiting, if not impossible, condition, we need to turn to the question of how recording, broadcasting and otherwise disseminating performances might be relevant. So I suggest to approach these questions using performance as a summative notion for a congeries of practices of acting, viewing, recording, producing, broadcasting, and so on.

This move transforms the object of study. We need to inquire into how and with what implications various groups of practices have been represented (and in what medium) by Balinese or other Indonesians and by foreigners as theatre, on what occasions, for what purposes. So doing situates the object of study, as well as the practice of studying and analyzing it, critically in a way that emphasizes the cultural and historical conditions of such representation. In particular, it raises questions about what are the presuppositions that different people have used in variously representing Bali (as).

An inquiry into the cultural and historical particularity of presuppositions invites a brief excursus into the philosopher Collingwood's account of metaphysics. What Collingwood termed metaphysics is the study of a thinker's or a discipline's absolute presuppositions—the ideas on which a system of thought is founded, the usually unexpressed statements that *articulate* (in both the metaphorical and the mechanical sense of the word) a method, theory, or worldview. Presuppositions are more than mere context; they are what make a statement possible. 'Every statement [...] is in answer to a question' (Collingwood 1940: 23). That

²⁸ This is not only applicable to Balinese theatre, but potentially other regional/national theatres, and also on any object of study that, once examined critically and broken down into practices, including practices of representation and mediation, cannot be considered an essence. I shall return to this in the Conclusion.

which allows the question to be asked is a presupposition, and it can be either relative, standing as an answer to another (logically prior) question, or absolute, that is, generating questions but never standing as an answer to one. An absolute presupposition is, in other words, the point where thought hits a wall; there is no going beyond it. Metaphysics, then, is the attempt ‘to find out what absolute presuppositions have been made by this or that person or group of persons, on this or that occasion or group of occasions, in the course of this or that piece of thinking’ (Collingwood 1940: 47). This is a strictly historical and anthropological endeavour. It does not aim to arrive at eternal and absolute ontological truths, but merely to point out and study the absolute presuppositions made by specific people or disciplines at specific historical moments, in order to elucidate their methodological and intellectual function and not to examine their truth-value. ‘All metaphysical questions are historical questions’ and so are metaphysical propositions (Collingwood 1940: 49). So, far from metaphysics involving abstract universalization, such an inquiry is empirical in that it involves asking what presuppositions were actually made on a particular occasion.

Because every historical fact is a constellation of facts, a presuppositional analysis can never seek to ascertain a single absolute presupposition in isolation, but ‘a constellation of them’ (Collingwood 1940: 66). One Bakhtinian qualification may be useful here. Bakhtin referred to different ‘way[s] of conceptualizing, understanding, and evaluating the world’ (Morson & Emerson 1990: 141) as *heteroglossia*. He remarked on the unsystematic character of the different languages in the concept of heteroglossia, stating that each language ‘reflects in its particular unsystematic clustering [...] the contingent historical and social forces that have made it’ (Morson & Emerson 1990: 141). Similarly, absolute presuppositions need not be seen as a system—a ‘constellation’ need not even consist of presuppositions that are mutually compatible.

To illustrate what an absolute presupposition is, Collingwood presented an anecdotal conversation between a metaphysician and a pathologist about the relationship between a disease and 'its' symptoms, finally arriving at the conclusion that there is no good reason for pathology as a discipline to believe that symptoms have causes (a thought which is itself based on the presupposition that all things have causes), other than that this is what works in this particular discipline: 'We don't question it. We don't try to verify it. It isn't a thing anybody has discovered [...]. It is a thing we just take for granted' says the pathologist (Collingwood 1940: 31). One cannot address what one is not able to ask. An absolute presupposition is where all conversation must end. And yet, if we are not to collapse two different discourses into one, this is precisely the point where the project of studying Balinese performance needs to become dialogic: that is two assemblages of presuppositions.

If we are not to conflate two distinct discourses, then we must consider critically the presuppositions held by the various groups of people who have dealt with theatre in Bali on one register or another. But how is presupposing and representing linked to the practices of the people that are the subjects of this study? For this question to be answerable, one would need not only to consider representations *of* practices, but to start by viewing representing itself *as* a practice. Then, it is possible to ask: what does the practice of representing theatre, audiences, or Bali *as* do, and to whom? In other words, how are representations linked to the social, political and cultural circumstances of the people involved?

The Cultural Studies notion of articulation was developed precisely to link the idea of representation to the issues above. Representation as a practice is closely related to the twin senses of articulation as both a link and an utterance. Hall defined articulation as 'the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time' (1996: 141). And, like Goodman's point about representation, Hall insisted that one needs to ask: '[U]nder

what circumstances *can* a connection be forged or made? So the so-called “unity” of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be re-articulated in different ways because they have no necessary “belongingness” (1996: 141). One, then, may be justified in asking: when an articulation is made, what other possible articulations are excluded, and what is dis-articulated? Who gets to speak and who is silenced?

This thesis aims to examine these representations and articulations *as* practices, situated within a complex historical, social and political network of relations that may escape the possibility of total determination. Indeed, articulation in Cultural Studies partly arose in response to structuralist claims to objectivity and the totality of cognitive structures. Laclau, in particular, took issue with privileged articulations as hegemony and asserted that claims about the totality of structure are deeply political (1990). Accordingly, I wish to examine to what extent this approach to articulation and hegemony can foreground the tensions, cracks and incoherencies that have hitherto been sutured in the totalized and endlessly reproduced picture of Balinese culture, and Balinese theatre and dance in particular.

Questions and Methods

This research aims to address representations of Balinese performance-related practices and Balinese culture more generally. In order to do so, I have argued that I need to treat representing itself as a practice in specific contexts. How then does the theoretical framework set out above shape the present research *as* a practice? This section will address how I propose to embark on this research and what the anticipated problems are.

One of the topics of my research is the practices of recording Balinese theatre for film and television and the potential consequences for live performance (as understood, articulated and practised in Bali). I have demonstrated above that both audiences and Balinese performance have been taken as central by theatre scholars and practitioners in Europe and

the United States and yet, they have both been under-researched in a rigorous manner that makes a serious recognition of Balinese understandings. So I would argue that paying attention to Balinese accounts of their practices is crucial (for a detailed analysis of approaches that claim to have done exactly this, cross-ref. 98-100, 164-165). I have argued that mediation is inescapable and central to all accounts of performance. But mediation only becomes researchable if considered as a congeries of practices. This gives rise to a series of questions about practices of recording, making, and watching performance in several sites (television stations, the Institute of Arts, longstanding centres of theatre excellence, and television viewers' homes) in contemporary Bali. Due to the situated nature of practices, these questions can only be addressed in detail *via* an ethnographic study of media- and performance-related practices.

David MacDougall has argued that 'implicit in a camera style is a theory of knowledge' (interviewed in Barbash and Taylor 1996: 371). So an analysis of practices of recording Balinese performance can potentially inform us about the theory of knowledge and the models of communication by which people operate, the ways cameramen justify their technical choices and the extent to which arguments about the audience shape these practices. I shall investigate how actors address the audience in live performance, whether this is different from televised theatre, and how they talk about it outside performance. The practices to be researched also include the ways actors go about extemporizing performance depending on their audience, and how they describe the experience of being recorded. So I wish to inquire how recording has changed the way they train, prepare and perform, how people talk about themselves as audiences and the relationship between themselves and actors before, during, and after a live performance, and the ways they engage with televised theatre and dance. What are the various ways in which they are interpellated in Althusser's sense (1972)?

In addition, there needs to be some consideration of the differences between mediated materials and live performance. How does mediation affect a performance, however understood? In what ways do live and televised or otherwise recorded performance differ? However, this question assumes that the ‘performance’ is an object separate from, and in a sense more-than, its mediation. But on what grounds is such an assumption reasonable, especially in Bali, where televising is such a common form of performance dissemination? So rather than assuming that a contrast between live and mediated performance is the first and most important dichotomy to be dealt with when approaching performance-related practices in Bali, it might be more productive to examine the contexts and practices of making and watching different kinds of performance in various media, while allowing for the possibility that the practices involved in one kind of live performance may have more in common with those involved in a kind of televised performance than with another kind of live performance.

Even so, the polarity between live and mediated performance rests, as I have argued above (cross-ref. 58), on the notion of unmediated representation, which is an impossibility. However, one might put forward the idea of embodiment and embodied co-presence of performers and spectators as a marker of the distinct nature of live events. Despite the essentialist implications of the term (because ‘embodiment’ implies there is something to be embodied), approaches that draw attention to embodiment are valid insofar as they go against abstract notions of ‘the mind’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1999) and ground the discussion in the historical, political, social, economic and other contexts in which bodies are imagined and situated (race, class, gender, age, etc., and their intersections). As such, instead of invoking a fetishized and universal idea of ‘the body’ that every human being has or is (a generalized representation of the average, normal, self-evident body, which is nothing if not ideological), it is possible to ask questions that render bodies researchable: When is the body?

According to whom? Who represents whose body as what? This invites a recognition that ‘the body,’ and so what one talks about when speaking of embodied co-presence between actors and spectators, is not the same everywhere and at all times. Therefore, any discussion of embodiment in Bali would need to take into account Balinese ideas of ‘the body’ —for example, the idea that a body in its natural state is not a unified whole but something subject to constant articulation *via* an exercise of power (cross-ref. 243).

Even though my main focus is what Balinese are making and recording for themselves and other Indonesians in contemporary Bali, and given the long history of recording Balinese theatre and dance by foreigners, the project must also be framed by an interrogation of earlier filmic materials (ethnographic, documentary, fiction). How — and as what — have these materials represented Balinese performance and audiences? How have different films attempted to position, address and determine preferred readings for Western audiences? And how do these relate to local understandings? In a similar vein, the project is also contextualized by the fact that tens of thousands of foreigners are visiting Bali at any one time, not least because they tend to experience Balinese tourist performances mainly through their viewfinders. However, while Balinese widely maintain in public that their unique culture is what draws visitors to the island, by 2011-2012 it is questionable whether this was a major attraction, unless one extended culture to include sunbathing, surfing, snorkelling, drinking in bars, and so on. So another issue to investigate is how Balinese actors talk about and engage with these audiences, and whether there are different standards of performance. What do Balinese regard as the yardstick for performance in Bali? Who is the discerning audience? In order to answer such questions, the project requires two kinds of study. The first is a critical analysis of existing scholarly sources, which I interrogate by drawing on Media and Cultural Studies, in order to address issues of representation, articulation, and mediation as set out in this chapter. The second, as I argued earlier, involves fieldwork.

The scholarly work aims to address the background of recordings that shaped the critical-theoretical pedigree of Bali. My approach to the earlier representations of Balinese culture consisted mainly of a critical re-reading of historical sources, accompanied by a re-analysis of audio-visual material. Even a cursory treatment of this material requires asking questions, the most obvious of which include: What role have ‘fiction’ films like *Insel der Dämonen* (1933), the iconic *Road to Bali* (1952), and *South Pacific* (1958) played in creating the popular image of the island in the 1930s and 1950s (Cohen 2010)? However, the distinction between fiction and ‘non-fiction’ may not be entirely appropriate. To what extent might ethnographic films and documentaries be seen as partly derivative of the former? Is it fair to say that Bateson and Mead’s *Trance and Dance in Bali* largely created a standard for subsequent filmic representations of theatre such as *The Miracle of Bali* (1969), *Bali: The Mask of Rangda* (1975), and *Tanz und Trance auf Bali* (1983)?

Ethnographic films and documentaries are, I would argue, important precisely because they are branded and marketed as non-fiction. How do their modes and styles of representation of both theatre and audiences compare to the feature films mentioned above and what was their role in shaping the various ‘Bali as...’ myths?²⁹ A close examination may prove useful in mapping some of the genealogies that defined the field in its present form and perhaps in abandoning the fiction/non-fiction distinction altogether, while at the same time exploring the parallels between ethnography and pornography (Hansen, Needham & Nichols 1991; cross-ref. 113-114). However, the critical interrogation of such sources is limited by the extent to which I am able to approach the work of earlier ethnographers and anthropologists, such as Bateson and Mead’s, on their terms—what Collingwood described as re-enactment (1993 [1946])—in order to arrive at their presuppositions, rather than evaluating their approaches through an anachronistic application of contemporary critique. So

²⁹ I use ‘myth’ in Barthes’ sense: as ‘depoliticized speech’ (2000 [1957]: 142), as the ideological naturalization of the cultural (2000 [1957]: 131).

I am not attempting an interpretation (a complex issue to which I shall return in Chapter Nine) of such films *per se*, but I am interested in commentary about them on the one hand, and a presuppositional analysis (Collingwood 1940) of their methods, styles, and purposes on the other.

For an analysis of more recent representations of Balinese performance, I used the recordings of the STSI-SOAS Balinese Television Project (1500 hours of cultural television programmes, 1990-1997). The recordings are divided into three sets: classical Balinese theatre and dance; Modern Indonesian society, culture, and economy; and modern Balinese and Indonesian theatre and culture. Obviously, selectivity is at issue. I focused only on the recordings that bear on theatre (approximately 100 hours), and concentrated primarily on the genres that are still watched live and televised today, in order to trace differences in the ways audiences were represented then and now.

I approached these background materials from the following perspectives: historical contextualization, technique or technology, and *mise en scène*. I focused on the articulations and metaphors employed³⁰ on the narrative level, but also on the kind of montage used, because this is precisely the filmic reification of suturing and articulation (the editing together of two distinct shots with no apparent or ‘natural’ connection into a coherent whole),³¹ in the form of cutaways, editing for continuity, seamless transitions between spatially and temporally unconnected scenes, and of course in the relationship between image and voiceover. I also tried to perform a cursory forensic analysis that attempted to trace, where possible, the conditions of production, and to explore the *discours* around them (dialogue,

³⁰ Of course, it is not self-evident that Balinese work with a notion of metaphor sufficiently close to be useful. However, in this context I may reasonably refer to metaphors, because my sources are Euro-American.

³¹ An example of Soviet montage may be useful here to explain what I am looking for. Kuleshov created a short film (circa 1920) in which a shot of the expressionless (if there is such a thing) face of an actor (Ivan Mozzhukin) was edited together with three different shots (a bowl of soup, a girl, a coffin). The audience of the film was reportedly struck by the exquisite acting of Mozzhukin, who was supposedly able to convey his alternating feelings (hunger, desire, grief) in seeing the various shots through subtle changes in his facial expression (Betancourt 2004: 64-65). The ‘Kuleshov effect’ essentially exemplifies the idea that meaning can be derived from articulation.

analysis, and commentary). However, a full analysis would require me to conduct ethnography of the past, which is both extremely difficult (if not impossible), and, given the time constraints of a research degree, beyond the scope of this thesis.

These materials are particularly relevant to the research for various reasons. For one, they comprise a significant cross-section of the works that helped disseminate Balinese performance to a mass public *via* the mass media. The Mead-Bateson initial period of recording is marked by a strongly didactic, indeed enunciative, tone, perhaps because the intended audience consisted mainly of foreign anthropology and psychiatry students. A hypothesis to be challenged is whether—with the exception of trance, which supposedly drew into the performance or ritual (pre-selected) ‘members of the audience’ and was largely used to exemplify pre-judged points about Balinese nature or culture—Balinese audiences were completely irrelevant to, and excised from, the recordings except as colourful background that lend authenticity and positioned the object of study within a living culture. However, ethnography-as-pornography (cross-ref. 113-114) by default erases indigenous accounts and pre-articulates them as extraneous. To what extent have these practices changed in recent years? How do various Balinese experience being recorded and how do they go about recording themselves? These questions aim to open up the apparently finalized text of the recording to current debate. It is also obvious from the above that this research could not take place without spending a significant amount of time in the field. So in light of these considerations, how can one research practices, especially when the researcher’s practices are part of the problem?

My fieldwork developed largely as an ethnographic study of theatre making, recording, and watching practices in Bali. By ‘ethnography’ I mean a study partly along the classical lines of participant-observation, where my participation consisted mainly of taking part in performances as a member of the audience. As the research raises some quite complicated

issues, I tried to maximize the time for my fieldwork and spent fifteen months in Bali (June 2011-September 2012), in locations designed to highlight the variation that was evident and that had already been noted by many observers. In order to be able to talk to different groups of Balinese and to understand as much of the various languages used in performance as possible, I studied Indonesian at SOAS (2010-2011), and took private tuition in Balinese with three different instructors both before and during the fieldwork (2011-2012). I also later attended the Kawi (Old Javanese) International Summer School 2013 at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. However, my relatively limited knowledge of Balinese remains a major obstacle to the research, not only in terms of comprehension of performances and discussions (which was partly mitigated by studying recorded materials with my Balinese language teachers), but most importantly in terms of the ways my Balinese interlocutors framed what they told me because of what they thought I could understand.

As this was my first visit to Bali and the first time I had contact with Balinese performance beyond ethnographic film, first I attended as many performances as possible to familiarize myself with the variety of performance in contemporary South Bali (Denpasar, Ubud, Singapadu). I also attended the government-sponsored International Bali Arts Festival in June-July 2011 and in 2012. This resulted in a wide array of recorded materials. These comprised partial and full recordings of over 65 live performances using my own camera, 115 recordings of televised performances by Bali's national and local television stations, 9 radio performances by the state radio network of Indonesia (RRI), and 9 commercially produced VCDs and DVDs (by Aneka Records and Maharani Records). After this long period of observing performances and recordings, I watched, transcribed, and discussed some of these materials with various groups of Balinese (both experts and non-experts) in order to examine the ways in which Balinese engaged with such performances (commentary, criticism, interpretation, and so forth).

These discussions mostly took two forms: semi-structured one-on-one interviews and loose group discussions. These were conducted in Indonesian, Balinese, or a mixture of the two, with the exception of a discussion with Dibia on 04/08/2012, which took place in English at his insistence (the original transcripts of translated excerpts can be found in Appendix A). For interviews, I went to meetings with a few initial questions to start the conversation, and then allowed my interlocutor to take the discussion in any direction he or she chose. I usually finished with a question to the effect of: 'Is there anything else you feel I should know about this topic?' or 'What do you think I should have asked about this?' This often resulted in a long discussion starting right at the point when I thought the interview had already concluded, which often took me in entirely unexpected directions. This approach allowed for more freedom in the themes discussed, and for my interlocutor to focus on what she or he thought was important. I found that this had a distinct advantage compared to the few more structured interviews I attempted. Because the rigid framework I imposed on the conversation in the latter, such formal discussions were only useful insofar as they confirmed the existence of what emerged as an 'official register' in which Balinese have been trained to represent their culture to others (cross-ref. 164-167).

I approached groups in one of two ways: either in a semi-structured discussion similar to what I described above, which proved the most useful when participants started ignoring me and talking among themselves; or by watching a performance (live, recorded by me, or televised) with a group of people and then asking them to explain to me what was going on.

Neither of these approaches involved 'focus groups' in the sense usually employed in Media Studies, even though they have long been considered one of best methods to discover participants' opinions, meanings, and ways of understanding (Lazarsfeld 1969; Merton 1987; Morgan 1988). However, focus groups raise various kinds of problems (see Lunt and Livingstone 1996), the first of which is selection. In Bali, groups tend to self-select, as the

people one works with eventually invite friends, neighbours and relatives. The only time a group discussion I held came close to being comparable to a focus group was one I held at the Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI) in Denpasar, where I asked my host, I Wayan Dibia, who is Professor of Dance and Choreography at ISI, to invite whomever he thought would be interested in watching and discussing a televised recording. What resulted was a discussion with ISI academics, which was most telling in what it revealed about the power relations involved in the practice of commenting, rather than the commentary itself (cross-ref. Chapter Nine). As the point of the research is not what people think about performance, but rather the ways they engage in performance-related practices and their representations, the discussion at ISI proved to be one of the most productive of my fieldwork, because it clarified the fact that commentary is a social activity and so a practice that involves power and knowledge.

My discussions with Professor Dibia, ISI academics, and other performers with academic credentials, whose work, at least in part, is imposing order on practices, also brought to the fore the problem of the ‘well-informed informant’ (Back 1960), and the limitations of relying too much on expert accounts, which often show ‘overagreement,’ while excluding ambiguity and variation (Harris 1968: 585-588). However, I used these accounts in order to contrast the various contexts in which Balinese represented themselves and their practices during my fieldwork and to consider the resulting antagonisms. For instance, I had the opportunity to compare well-informed informants speaking to me privately, but knowing they are on record, with public occasions when the same people presented a more ‘proper’ and sanitized account. These authoritative voices were in turn contrasted with the accounts of villagers and non-academic performers, who also represented themselves *as*, but on the whole much more transparently. Finally, any kind of conversation between a researcher and one or more participants inevitably invites the question of how the researcher affects the topics and ways people discuss. However, even if it were possible to study people’s practices

under laboratory conditions, it would definitely not be ideal, because what people say in discussion is not itself the answer to my research questions; rather, it is material to be worked upon critically.

The choice of which materials to focus on in my discussions with people and groups of people depended on a variety of factors: technicalities (such as the quality and length of the recording); what my interlocutors were interested in or familiar with; and also what emerged as more important contextually (such as claims about specific genres' popularity or endangerment at the time of the research). In addition, I tried to focus on materials from various contexts, including both large and small-scale performances that took place on different kinds of occasions (secular and religious festivals, ceremonies, and performances commissioned as entertainment; cross-ref. 189-191 on the implications of 'entertainment'). However, as the thesis is overall oriented towards a theoretical critique of existing approaches to and representations of performance in Bali rather than based primarily on an ethnographic study, inevitably there is still a wealth of materials that remain unstudied, and which can form a basis for future research.

A key issue that I investigated during fieldwork was (recent and contemporary) government, Indonesian academic, and tourist representations of Balinese performance. In order to address these, I spent time in Denpasar, the capital of Bali, researching academics who have worked on theatre, at Udayana University and the Institute of Arts (ISI), as they are a key point of articulation between the Indonesian state and local Balinese performers. The people involved not only have 'the function of intellectuals' (Gramsci 1971: 9), but are furthermore academic intellectuals and so can be seen as 'nodes,' points of relative fixity, in Laclau's account of *discours* (1990: 91; Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 112). Later in the fieldwork I conducted a number of more formal and structured interviews in order to obtain the official view about the issues under discussion and relate it to the ones derived from practice as

explained below. I also researched the registers in which officials commented on performance- and culture-related issues in such venues as *The Bali Post*, Bali's largest newspaper, and examined a number of formal speeches delivered by government representatives on formal occasions, including the Bali Arts Festival opening and closing ceremonies. These materials were complemented by previous research on the Arts Institute (Hough 2000) and the Bali Arts Festival (Noszlopy 2002). However, as the subject remains vast and requires both extensive background research and detailed ethnographic work and analysis of performances, this study is far from comprehensive.

I spent the latter part of the fieldwork occasionally³² working with the regional state television station (TVRI) and up-and-coming independent channels DewataTV and BaliTV in Denpasar in order to contrast public service and commercial imaginations of audiences, including how they represent viewers in terms of ethnicity, class, gender and civic affiliation. This was done in the following ways: Interviews with people working in marketing provided me with a breakdown of Balinese audiences and Bali as a market, and as a marketable product for Indonesians and others. I also joined television crews in shootings of live performances in different contexts (ceremonies, festivals, celebrations). I attended 5 TVRI shootings, 4 by BaliTV, and 4 by DewataTV over a period of six months (March - August 2012). These were small, multi-camera productions, and most of the editing happened during the shooting, as all three channels worked with equipment that allowed switching between cameras on the spot (video switchers), resulting in pre-edited footage. My research at shootings consisted mainly of joining the person working the switcher, watching and discussing when and why he or she chose which angles to use, and what kind of instructions he or she gave the cameramen. Only limited amounts of editing happened after the shooting,

³² Due to the timing of performances in Bali, a more sustained period of continuous work with television crews was not possible. Periods of no performances were followed by periods that required a TV crew every night. Producers from TVRI, DewataTV, and BaliTV notified me whenever it was possible for me to accompany their crews to shootings around the island.

mostly involving censorship, advertisements and insertion of credits. These were covered in brief meetings with producers from each channel.

Spending time with crews and people recording and editing televised theatre allowed me to observe how they go about their tasks technically, as well as to what extent the context of the performance and ideas about the audience (or rather, their articulation) shape their practices. I have attempted to follow Collingwood in analyzing the presuppositions emerging out of the practice of putting together and recording performances. The questions include the following: What are the presuppositions, not only about the audience but about communication itself, that hold these practices together, however loosely or systematically? When is the intended audience Indonesian, when Balinese, and when is it something else altogether?³³ However, my understanding of media-related practices was limited by my lack of previous experience in the field.³⁴ It was a steep learning curve, accommodated by my informants to the extent that they were willing to explain what they aimed to accomplish. As the thesis deals with articulations, these explanations, being themselves representations of their practices, were equally, if not more, important to the research than my own observations of how crew members performed their work.

In order to probe the impact of practices of recording and televising on practices of performing, I discussed with actors of televised theatre the experience of performing in front of a camera as opposed to a live audience and about the ways this changes their work, particularly in terms of extemporization. To what extent does filming alter their approach to the performance? Do they attempt to produce a higher level of coherence for the camera compared to a live audience, which may be able to tolerate greater amounts of digression (depending on the live relationship established and reconfigured on the spot)?

³³ For instance, one index of this may be the way religion is represented, because Balinese speak of themselves as exclusively 'Hindu' by contrast to Indonesia, perceived as largely Muslim.

³⁴ I was previously trained in Theatre and Performance Studies (BA, MRes), and the study of religion (MA), before moving on to read for my PhD in Media and Cultural Studies.

The rest of my time was divided between studying performing and commenting practices with actors and audiences in two of the centres of theatre excellence (Singapadu and Ubud) and, by contrast, more rural understandings. For the first, I stayed in the household of Professor Dibia, which consisted mostly of professional performers, from September 2011 until April 2012, in Singapadu (Gianyar). For the latter, I spent May 2012 and July-August 2012 staying with a family of non-experts in the village community of Bona (Gianyar). However, the focus remained on South Bali, both because of its historical importance for Balinese performing arts (cross-ref. 157-158), and as a result of time and access restrictions (a lack of contacts in other parts of the island).

The study of live performances involved spending time both ‘backstage’ as well as in front and around performances. The former consisted in an ethnographic study of practices of theatre-making. One of the problems encountered during this part of the study, but also more generally, was my gender, which, as is customary in Bali, necessitated that I had to be accompanied by another woman whenever possible, and may also have limited the extent and ways in which men were willing to engage me in discussion. With the help of female actresses and other women, I attempted to gain access and observe how actors prepare for a live performance, and to understand what is going on at the beginning of a performance, when the first person on stage is trying to ‘feel’ the audience (Hobart 2008). How do actors decide what will come next? How do they determine what the audience likes, and how do they comment on it during and after the performance?

As I have argued the relational character of performance practices in Bali, in order to address Balinese understandings of what is happening on stage (whether live or on television), I also spent time with groups of Balinese who attend live performances and watch televised theatre on a regular basis. However, the question here is not what audiences think. I was not attempting a realist stance of ‘getting inside the native’s head.’ The object of study is

audience commentary—that is a congeries of practices which are a crucial part of theatre as a complex event. These commentaries include what is happening on stage, as well as representations of the relationship between actors and spectators, and how spectators perceived the various styles of recording and representing the different aspects of performance. Unlike the question of what people think, what they can articulate and the ways in which they do so is arguably an accessible object of study. Some questions that arose in this process were: What is the position of the live audience of a recorded performance, when the ‘original audience’ is completely erased from the footage (which happens regularly in theatre recordings)? What happens when the ‘original audience’ is present in the footage?

An additional problem with observing spectators, as Hartley remarked on the ethnographic study of television audiences (1992: 6), is that it is possible to watch people watch a performance, or watch the performance, but not both at once. In the case of recordings, I have tried to alleviate this by being already familiar with the material. In the case of live performances, this remained a valid concern; however, as I will argue in Part Two of the thesis, watching is not all, and in some cases not primarily, what audiences in Bali do.

Compared to my observations of audiences, commentary was particularly significant for additional reasons. On the one hand, because it is one of the ways in which practices can be represented: ‘we must not imagine that the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher; the world is not the accomplice of our knowledge; there is no prediscursive providence which disposes the world in our favour’ (Foucault 1981: 67). On the other, practices of commentary can also serve to control representations and interpretations of the world because, according to Foucault, commentary ‘exorcises the chance element of discourse by giving it its due’ (1981: 58). So the question is not only what Balinese audiences actually say about what is going on, but also what can be known about

audience engagement in the first place, who represents whom as what, when, and for what purposes, and how generalizable any of that is. Lastly, it is crucial to ask: what is commentary for (Hobart 1991; cross-ref. 272-273)?

The above also brings to the fore once again the issue of role. Different people argue differently on different occasions, depending on who is present and the power hierarchy of the given situation. Besides, it is not always easy to distinguish between actors, producers, and audiences, as these groups are in no way mutually exclusive. However challenging in terms of method, this may prove critically useful, as it underlines both the Bakhtinian idea of dialogue and Foucault's conception of the subject as a series of constantly changing positionalities. However, the issue of role also calls attention to a potential limitation of my research: to what extent was it possible for me to establish the reasons and purposes for which people told me what they told me? And how far did what they said depend on what they believed I was in a position to understand or wanted to hear? As I mentioned above, I tried to view the latter as a finding rather than an obstacle, as the ways people argue in different situations was part of my object of study. The extent to which this approach was successful, however, remains an open question that can only be answered with more time in the field. So I am fully aware of the limits of the information that I was given, as the work of more senior researchers (see Hobart 2000; Fox 2011) shows that it tends to take years before people reveal what they really think, or, as Balinese sometimes say, before they 'show the contents of their stomachs' (*ngèdèngang isin basang*; Hobart 2014a: 12).

What also emerges from the discussion above is the need to interrogate multiple kinds of materials (live performances, recordings, commentaries, speeches and so on). This was the reason I chose not to follow a practice-as-research approach in this project. Although such a study would have allowed me to gain an in-depth and practice-oriented understanding of techniques, principles, and vocabularies of practice, it would have forced me to focus on one

set of practices (such as one or two specific performing genres and the ways they are taught and performed, or televising, including recording and production, or music-making, and so on), which would limit the scope of the research. In addition, the hierarchy of student-teacher relationships involved in a practice-as-research approach, where the researcher assumes the role of trainee, could potentially limit the possibility of critical engagement with the object of study. However, the approach I chose to follow was not entirely free of such concerns: as a young researcher in Bali I benefited from great help from some of the people, such as Wayan Dibia, whose work I analyze in the course of this thesis, and in the homes of whom I stayed during my fieldwork. My respect and gratitude towards them was sometimes at odds with the need to critique them and may have coloured my conclusions.

In view of these concerns, and since I have been arguing for a position that views research *as* a practice, an additional difficulty arises: How does the above relate to the problem of the researcher's presence in the field? This question is usually raised with a concern about 'objectivity,' of the object of study being contaminated 'with the subjectivity of the researcher' (Willis 1980: 89-90). This rides on the presumed positivity and systematicity of the object of study, against which I have argued earlier. However, I could not assume that my presence did not affect anything in any way, not least because, just as the audience-spectator relationship is constituted and re-constituted on different occasions, so is the researcher-researched one. So I allowed for this and treated my research as a practice with its own situated and contingent set of conditions. In addition, as implied earlier, my presence may have altered how spectators discussed, because '[p]eople gear down information to the ignorance of the anthropologist' (Hobart 1996: 16). This need not necessarily be a disadvantage. For one, it allows one to think of ethnography as a practice in a way that refuses to hierarchize the researcher over the subjects of study and at the same time avoids treating them as merely 'Other.' The goal was 'to recognize others in the fullness of their

difference and to be recognized in return,’ with the whole range of contingencies that this recognition involves (Hobart 1996: 31). Finally, the researcher’s inadequacy could actually prove useful insofar as it traces a gap ‘in the shape made by the limits of our ignorance’ (Errington 1979: 232). It is precisely this gap that I defined as the missing aspect of *discours* which this project aims to approach.

This chapter has addressed the problems of treating theatre or dance as a positivity and self-evident universal, and has considered the advantages of a critical approach that examines the disjuncture between Euro-American ideas about theatre and Balinese ideas of their own practices. A critical interrogation of these issues invites questions about the processes of hegemony and silencing that have resulted in such a partial account of Balinese performance, not just in Performance Studies but also in Anthropology, as one of the definitive poles of theatre and social imagination. The goal of this research is then to examine in depth Balinese understandings of performance and the role that the complex dialogue between actors and audiences plays. The research hopes to go beyond existing accounts and to investigate the relationship between them and how Balinese themselves understand, articulate, and represent their own practices.

Keeping in mind the methodological pitfalls of my own research, which necessarily consists of a verbal mediation of Balinese practices and of indigenous accounts of these practices, I shall try not to represent Balinese performance as an object, but to examine my fieldwork experiences as a, potentially conflicting and incoherent, congeries of varied, situated practices of performance. How, then, does the theory and methods presented above help me to make sense of what has been written about Bali, starting with the curious closure around a set of images, in which theatre features so prominently? This will be the main issue considered in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three: Summative Notions in the Study of Bali

The theoretical discussion in the previous chapter help enables me to interrogate critically the ways in which scholars and other commentators on Bali have invoked different totalizing ideas in the description, interpretation, or explanation of Balinese society. In this chapter, I shall examine what is involved in using such summative notions to encapsulate a complex and unknown entity. What were the key concepts, metaphors or images used in the study of Bali and Balinese culture, and on what kinds of presuppositions were they based? What were the motivations, desired outcomes, and consequences of their use?

The Emergence of Culture

The idea of finding paradise on earth has long been a European concern. All manner of fantasies were projected onto the island of Bali long before much was known about it (Boon 1977). In the mid-nineteenth century, the German Sanskritist Friederich was sent to Bali and duly found a Hindu haven in the midst of a sea of Islam. Subsequently, he wrote *The Civilisation and Culture of Bali* (1959 [1849-50]), which has been hailed as ‘one of the first really informative accounts of the relationship between Hindu religion, literature and society on the island’ (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 117), and ‘the first definitive study of Bali’ (Boon 1977: 22).

Friederich started off his study on Bali by looking for ‘an explanation from the Sanskrit [...] of the name Bali’ (1959: 1), which subsequently provided the key to its essence: ‘The name *Bali* signifies [...] a hero,³⁵ [and ...] *Bali angka*, “the lap (birth place) of heroes”, is a very beautiful denomination of the holy land, and one which *expresses* the bold spirit of the

³⁵ How did the notion of hero come to be applied to the Indian epics? What would be the Balinese equivalent? What relationship does it bear to the hero of European Romanticism or the hero of Greek tragedy (two quite distinct notions)? Detailed engagement with such questions need to be reserved for another project.

nation' (1959: 1; emphasis added). He declared that '[i]n the Sanskrit words on Java and Bali we find corruptions which have not originated in an Indian mode' (Friederich 1959: 12) and focused on the project of rescuing any 'remains of the Vedas in Bali [because] the religion can only by their means become thoroughly intelligible' (Friederich 1959: 12). In Friederich's account, Bali was cast in terms of derivation from and preservation of a pre-Islamic, authentic culture originating from India and transmitted to Bali through the intermediary of Java: 'The *Vedas* have also been in Java, since the priests of Bali are of Javanese derivation' (1959: 12). The priests, i.e. high caste males, in particular, were described as the sole 'remaining preserves of the old literature and religion,' and the only ones that scholars of Sanskrit could rely on in order to achieve 'the *elucidation* of the Kavi' and to access and assess 'the stage at which the Javanese stood before the introduction of Muhammedanism' (Friederich 1959: 2; emphasis added). With this the Sanskritization of Bali was born.

Despite subsequent criticisms, the vision of Bali-as-Hindu has remained a powerful and totalizing framework.³⁶ The Balinese expert Roelof Goris shared Friederich's interest in Sanskrit, but refuted his claim that the Balinese possessed the Indian Vedas (see Swellengrebel 1960: 15), while Korn, a Dutch scholar with an unparalleled knowledge of Balinese traditional law, noted that

[t]he data which have come to the attention of Western scholars up to the present point towards the conclusion that the four early Indian collections of *wedas* are not extant on Bali; not even fragments of these wedic collections have been found. This problem was treated most recently by Goris, who pointed out that though Sanskrit is used on Bali as the ecclesiastical language, wedic Sanskrit is and remains an unknown territory to the priest (1960a [1928]: 135).

³⁶ The Dutch scholar specializing in Balinese religion, Hooykaas (e.g. 1973), preferred to describe it as Agama Tirtha, the religion of holy water, because of the complex mix of local and Buddhist elements.

Korn's, as well as other scholars', such as Goris', interests lay instead in the issue of *adatrecht*, which was a construction, combining the Indonesian *adat*³⁷ with the Dutch *recht* to correspond to the idea of 'customary' law. However, under the guise of writing about *adat*, and resulting from extensive periods in the field, some of these studies (e.g. Korn's *Het Adatrecht van Bali*, 1932) managed to accumulate a wealth of material, offering an encyclopaedic overview of many aspects of life with copious attention to detail.

In his introduction to *Bali: Studies in Life, Thought, and Ritual* (1960), a collection in English of the most important Dutch scholars, the Dutch missionary and scholar J.L. Swellengrebel remarked that 'our knowledge of Bali's early history has been enriched, and our *vision* of the development and nature of Balinese culture *clarified*, in particular as regards the relation between the non-indigenous and the indigenous elements amalgamated in it' (1960: 15; emphases added). For Swellengrebel, the organizing principle was 'culture.' Even though 'culture' remained undefined, the desired outcome of scholarship on Bali, as stated in the introduction, was to distinguish between 'indigenous cultural elements' and the 'cultural elements of Hindu or Hindu-Javanese origin' (Swellengrebel 1960: 29-30). What was meant by 'culture' was unproblematic.

Recent scholarship has represented the political implications of colonial modes of knowledge in various ways. Vickers argued that colonial 'knowledge was not disinterested, [... but] went hand-in-hand with increasing colonial control over the island' (2012 [1989]: 127). However, Geoffrey Robinson criticized Vickers for 'paying relatively little attention to the unique role of the colonial state in shaping [Bali]. Rather, he has described the changing image of Bali as a product of free interaction of the impressions of a series of politically disinterested visitors' (1995: 21). This description, or lack thereof, was also combined with representing, by omission, Balinese as apolitical, whereas '[e]xamples of political intrigue

³⁷ *Adat* itself, however, is not unproblematic. I shall return to the concept in later chapters (cross-ref. 197-198).

and civil war are legion and occur without significant interruption up to the beginning of the twentieth century' (Robinson 1995: 21). This amounted to a representation of Balinese as rather absent from the process of their colonization, while their own political intrigues and wars were seriously underrepresented. In this line of thought, Schulte Nordholt has pointed out that, although 'ostensibly, [... the colonial] operation was meant to "restore tradition," [... it] dismantled most of the royal centres and reorganized [local] relationships [...] in a most rigorous way' (1991: 11). Even though Vickers did not explore this further, he did, in fact, note that Korn himself had criticized colonial administrations for 'constantly rationalising things for bureaucratic convenience. As they rationalised, they dropped the majority of Balinese practices and utterly changed the practices they retained. By the very act of preserving Balinese culture, the colonial administrators of Bali were in fact changing it' (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 134). But how adequate is this moulding-while-preserving account of Balinese culture? And what does it presuppose about culture, society, and their public expressions?

As my emphases in the quotations earlier in this section suggest (cross-ref. 86-87), with the strong visual and so largely static and anti-dialogical stress, early scholars tended to reify culture as an object to be viewed and studied by the scholar's powers of observation. Despite Vickers's questioning of the practices involved in the 'preservation' of Balinese culture, his critique in fact replicates this reification of culture as an object or structure, rather than as a site—or moments—of contestation, which would require one to consider culture as a hegemonic articulation and so inquire into alternative ways Balinese and others articulated what was going on.

How did Balinese respond to such articulations, particularly with regard to the preservation of culture? Providing a glimpse of Balinese accounts of these issues, Pollmann noted that '[t]he Balinese, at least the educated Balinese, are aware of the colonial strategies

behind the manifested love for their Rajas. It is part of the remaking of Bali. Of the Balinization of Bali' (Pollmann 1990: 15) by the colonizers, and, to some extent, by Balinese themselves following Dutch representations.

This 'Balinization' of Bali extended from architecture (Korn 1960b [1933]: 337-340), to education, to the practice of the arts, and to aesthetics. In an interview with Pollmann, Prof. Dr. Ide Gde Ing. Bagus said: '[W]hen I am in the primary school, I have to dance in the Balinese way. I have to draw in the Balinese style. I have to do Balinese literature' (Pollmann 1990: 15). What does it mean to dance 'in the Balinese way' and how does it pertain to subsequent developments in the arts after the Independence of Indonesia? Pollmann's informants often cast Balinization as an opposite to nationalism. Ibu Yasmin Oka stated: 'I was very young when already I had that nationalist feeling that Balinization was no good, even though I am not a politically talented person. There were in those years before the war two mainstreams: nationalism and Balinization' (Pollmann 1990: 17).

In Oka's narrative, '[a]fter Merdeka³⁸ we do away with Balinization. We practice Balinization, but in a completely different way. [...For instance] when you wear your hair short and you want to wear the traditional Balinese dress for the occasion of a party or a ceremony, you yet can make the traditional chignon, so I teach the girls at school how to use a chignon of artificial hair' (Pollmann 1990: 16). So neither are such concerns new, nor limited to post-colonial critiques. As the interview above suggests, Balinese in many contexts seem to concentrate on practices rather than more abstract notions of 'culture.' On what grounds, then, did early scholars, and even more so their critics, ignore indigenous ways of framing the issues in favour of an abstract and foreign notion like 'culture'? What are the

³⁸ *Merdeka* (freedom) is used here to refer to the independence of the Indonesian archipelago, following the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence (*Proklamasi Kemerdekaan Indonesia*) on 17th August 1945. The declaration of Independence followed the end of the Japanese invasion of 1942-1945; however, Dutch forces returned and remained present on the archipelago until 1949 (for detailed accounts, see Ricklefs 1993; Robinson 1995).

implications of the notion of ‘preservation,’ and what do such accounts and articulations accomplish?

Preservation in the case of Dutch colonial scholars and administrators would only be possible if they ‘believed they already knew the socio-political structure of this area and they even pretended to know how to restore South Balinese society to its “proper traditional order”’ (Schulte Nordholt 1991: 11). Even if a proper order did exist, it is unclear by what means it would be accessible. So this is an instance of thinking cyclically, because the only way to posit the original order is *via* its corrupted, as *per* Friederich, derivations, and the only way to recognize these derivations as such is *via* an *a priori* definition of that original, which simultaneously assumes an essence. By virtue of Sanskrit texts being seen as artefacts transmitted from a golden past and deposited in the time-capsule that was Bali, the ‘[g]enerations of scholars [who] engaged in the study of this literature did not realise that a great deal of what they saw as Javanese or Indian was, and still is, written by Balinese’ (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 120). In other words, ‘text’ in this instance became an object, rather than an occasion for argument. Schulte Nordholt also remarked that ‘[t]he official colonial documents [...] produced [...] more “bureaucratic mumbling” rather than genuine information about ordinary Balinese life. The more Western concepts and the images which streamed forth from them gained in strength, the more the *view of Bali itself* tended to be lost in *obscurity*’ (Schulte Nordholt 1986: 44; emphases added). So it would seem that in significant part the concepts through which Bali was articulated were foreign, which raises interesting questions.

However, as I hinted earlier, there is a twofold problem here. Schulte Nordholt’s formulation implies that it is possible to identify a real Bali, and that it is some kind of positivity rather than something that is inherently contested. The existence of a ‘Bali itself’ is also implicit in and complicit with the colonial effort to preserve Bali and ‘its culture.’ So the

issue is not so much whether such an original, proper order ever existed, but that even the critics are caught up in the notion that there is such a thing as culture, thus ignoring the antagonisms that such an articulation denies. Would either Vickers or Schulte Nordholt produce such an account if what is at issue were rival articulations in particular social and political settings? In the end, what is presupposed in the idea that culture is something that can be preserved, and why is this important?

So what sort of thing is culture that it can stand for what goes on in Bali? Preservation presupposes that the thing preserved, here culture, is a substance, a totality that can be clearly identified, classified, and recorded. Collingwood termed this mode of knowledge as ‘substantialism’ and argued that ‘a substantialistic metaphysics implies a theory of knowledge according to which only what is unchanging is knowable’ (1993: 42).

‘Substantialism’ entails that the elements used as the basis of explanation are regarded as fixed and stable, independent of context and relations with other elements, or as Firsts in Peirce’s pragmatist ontology as explained in Chapter Two (cross-ref. 40-42). Substantialist thinking presupposes a theoretical entity, recourse to which ultimately unifies occasions that would otherwise be unrelated as manifestations of or derivations from this pre-existing entity.³⁹ Indeed, in the colonial project, substantial or true culture was excavated from a glorious past, sanctified and passed on as a treasure to be safeguarded unchanged under the guise of traditionalism. But culture in this context is far from the ‘neutral’ term it is in popular parlance; it has implications and consequences, particularly considering the power imbalance involved in colonial relationships.⁴⁰

Closely related is the idea of ‘expression’ as seen in Friederich: the name of Bali ‘*expresses* the bold spirit of the nation’ (1959: 1; emphasis added). Expression, from the

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of Substantialism, see Mulligan and Correia 2013.

⁴⁰ Is there a parallel between this stance and current discussions in Bali about various ‘cultural artefacts’ being included in the ‘Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Register of Best Safeguarding Practices’ (see Unesco 1995-2012)?

Latin *ex-primere*, literally ‘to press out,’ at once presupposes the existence of an essence, here ‘the spirit’ to be ‘pressed out,’ as well as a medium through which the extracted essence becomes available, presumably to an observer capable of discerning it (and, perhaps, putting it to good use?). The idea of expression in a way reduces the subject of expression to a medium for the object expressed, the latter invariably more valuable than the former, which is merely a means to an end. I shall return to the issue of expression in due course (cross-ref. 179-187).

Apart from being a nostalgic idea, ‘oriented towards the past (to “custom” and “tradition”)’ (Fabian 1991: 193), this notion of preservable culture also comes with an inherent bias in favour of the people doing the identification of the bare essentials of the culture to be preserved in the first instance (see, for example, Swellengrebel’s lists of indigenous versus derived cultural elements [1960: 29-30]), and the people appointed to preserve it in the second. Furthermore, the transmission of culture from India to Bali happens, in the colonial image, through the medium of texts, with minor or major degrees of corruption (see Friederich 1959: 6), which entails, again, an inevitable circularity: the original can only be construed through its derivations, but the derivations can only be identified as such by previous knowledge of the original. It then rests upon the quality of the medium and the scholars’ ability to correct the corruptions. The effect is to place the scholar as knowing subject as superior to the object of knowledge. In addition, in Friederich’s formulation above, culture, like media objects, is transmitted. If both culture and messages are transmitted, does it then follow that culture is or can be seen as message or a message bears some intrinsic connection to culture? What would be the implications?

Schulte Nordholt’s choice of words when he complained about ‘the view’ of real Bali being ‘lost in obscurity’ (1986: 44) is, then, significant. Not only does it unwittingly echo Friederich’s description of retrieving the Sanskrit origins of Kawi texts as ‘elucidation’

(1959: 2), and Swellengrebel's 'clarification' of a 'vision' (1960: 15), but it is also in line with a long history of expressions that use light as a visual metaphor for knowledge: shedding light, bringing to light, illuminating, making clear, (also, transparency in political and financial proceedings). Fabian argued that 'the ability to "visualize" a culture or society almost becomes synonymous for understanding it' (1983: 106), while Salmond (1982) explored the extent to which the notion of 'theory,' also premised on the condition of seeing,⁴¹ creates a spatial hierarchy that privileges the theorist/viewer, and she argued that this metaphor for knowledge is culturally specific. If so, assuming it is universal greatly reduces the ways of engaging with the objects and subjects of study.

The idea that culture is visible raises questions about the use and representation of visual media in the study of Bali. So Mead and Bateson's use of photographic and video records as an objective and scientific way of capturing Balinese culture depends upon a singular metaphor. Furthermore, the use of photography and silent film neatly eliminates the possibility of dialogue and so precludes alternatives before it even starts. Inevitably, this also raises questions about my own research methods in the field, which I have discussed in Chapter Two (cross-ref. 79-84).

The ideas outlined above touch on the larger issue of the use of figures of speech in academic language. Is it possible to speak or write without them? Indeed, early twentieth-century Western philosophy privileged 'literal language,' reaching

a peak in the doctrine of logical positivism [...] A basic notion of positivism was that reality could be precisely described through the medium of language in a manner that was clear, unambiguous, and, in principle, testable—reality could, and should, be literally describable.

⁴¹ From the Greek *θεωρώ* (*theoro*), *θέα* + *οράω*, which means 'to contemplate,' 'to view with some admiration. A sense of admiration is implicit in *θέα*—> *θαύμα*= wonder, miracle. In its basic sense, the verb means 'to give attention to a spectacle' (both *θεωρία* & *θεώρημα* [theory + theorem]) can be translated as spectacle), in the context of a festival. Proponents of the Peripatetic school argued that *θεωρώ* derives from *θεόν* + *οράω* = to see god, but the etymology was contested even at the time. See 'theory.' In: A. Stevenson (ed.) *Oxford Dictionary of English*. (2010) [Online] Available from: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001/m_en_gb0857340. [Accessed 21/03/2014]

Other uses of language were meaningless for they violated this empiricist criterion of meaning. During the heyday of logical positivism, literal language reigned supreme (Ortony 1979: 1).

This kind of literal language, added to the use of photography and film, was enthusiastically and largely uncritically embraced by Bateson and Mead⁴² in their project about the ‘Balinese Character’ (1942), which, as mentioned briefly in Chapter One, they carried out in the name of science, objectivity and truth, thus claiming singular authority over their object of study. In so doing, they carefully excluded Balinese as reflexive human subjects capable of commenting on their own practices. Their study coincided with the systematic recording of Balinese performance. But what was the status of theatre—my present object of study—in their research?

Mead explained that

[t]he choice of problem and of Bali as the site of our research was made in response to an inquiry by the director of the newly organized Committee for Research in Dementia Praecox, who asked psychologists, psychiatrists and anthropologists how they would go about studying dementia praecox (today called schizophrenia) in terms of their own discipline if they had a hundred thousand dollars to carry out a research program. I had some fragmentary knowledge of Balinese culture. Many years before I had seen some films of trance dancing. [...] It appeared to me that Balinese culture had many elements that suggested it would be a suitable one in which to explore the presence—or absence—of schizophrenic behavior (1977: 163-64).

Mead and Bateson’s study was, then, clearly formulated in terms of a concern for the mental health of Americans. Performance was not their object of study; it was merely a medium for the objective documentation of mental and emotional otherness, through which essences such as trance and ‘the Balinese character’ could be grasped. However, the many steps required to

⁴² However, it should not be assumed that Mead’s and Bateson’s approaches were identical. Brand’s article ‘For God’s Sake, Margaret’ (1976), a conversation between the author and Mead and Bateson, provided hints of the differences between the two anthropologists. Briefly, Mead advocated the use of the camera to avoid observer bias by using long, middle-distance shots and minimal editing afterwards, while Bateson suggested that the visual record should be seen as an art form, as it is impossible to erase the subjectivity of the person doing the recording. This is not, I think, a trivial matter, as it points out the complex agency behind the creation of a film and opens up possibilities of dialogue even in such monologic forms as a documentary film, which is almost always tightly held together by a voice-over narrative.

establish a relationship between an ‘attitude of the mind’ and the corresponding ‘system of posture and gesture’ (Bateson and Mead 1942: xv) were never clearly spelled out; rather, this connection was taken as natural and self-evident, and so took the form of an unquestioned presupposition, in Collingwood’s sense, throughout their work.

Furthermore, even though Bateson and Mead were sensitive to the limitations of their language, and admitted that they used ‘culture’ as a technical abstraction, as was usual for their discipline (1942: xii), terms like ‘theatre,’ ‘stage,’ or drama did not receive similar consideration. Rather, such terms were used both with reference to performance practices such as *Calonarang* (Bateson and Mead 1942: 31, 34) and as a metaphor for one’s body: for example, they asserted that ‘a child’s body becomes a sort of stage, and his body parts the actors on that stage’ (Bateson and Mead 1942: 26). Even though a great part of Mead and Bateson’s argument rested on their assumptions about ‘theatre,’ the question of its universal applicability never entered their discussion. Much the same can be said of the assumption that theatre was at once a vehicle through which to access, and an expression of, culture.

The Role of Theatre

Have later studies treated theatre or dance in Bali differently? And what was the relationship between Mead and Bateson’s broader assumptions about culture and ethnographic fieldwork at the time? According to James Clifford,

[i]n the 1920s, the new fieldworker-theorist brought to completion a powerful new scientific and literary genre, the ethnography, a synthetic cultural description based on participant-observation. [...] Culture was construed as an ensemble of characteristic behaviors, ceremonies and gestures, susceptible to recording and explanation by a trained onlooker. [...] [S]uccessful fieldwork mobilized the fullest possible range of interactions, but a distinct primacy was accorded to the visual: interpretation was tied to description (1983: 125).

The emphasis on the visual is interesting, as, despite the new claims at scientific authority, it seems to be retaining the presuppositions of earlier instances of scholarly work,

which emphasized ideas of light and visibility, as explored above. In addition, ‘observation’ comes here as an element incompatible with dialogue, which could lead one in quite different directions:

In this monograph we are attempting a new method of stating the intangible relationships among different types of culturally standardized behavior by placing side by side mutually relevant photographs. Pieces of behavior, spatially and contextually separated—a trance dancer being carried in procession, a man looking up at an aeroplane, a servant greeting his master in a play, the painting of a dream—may all be relevant to a single discussion; the same emotional thread may run through them. To present them together with words, it is necessary either to resort to devices which are inevitably literary, or to dissect the living scenes so that only desiccated items remain. By the use of photographs, the wholeness of each piece of behavior can be preserved, while the special cross-referencing desired can be obtained by placing the series of photographs on the same page (Bateson and Mead 1942: xii).

Meaning, then, is constructed and articulated *via* a montage between photographic representations of the same ‘emotional thread,’ the appearance of which is arbitrarily decided by the researchers. In addition, ‘the wholeness of each piece of behavior’ can be sufficiently explored through a photographic account and the researcher’s verbal account, without which, they note later ‘the photographic sequence is almost valueless’ (Bateson and Mead 1942: 49-50), and yet Balinese accounts can never be part of this ‘discussion.’ How different, then, was Bateson and Mead’s approach from their predecessors when it came to the study of Bali?

Referring to the presence of newly constructed roads, flashlights and uniformed policemen in Bali, Mead remarked: ‘But all this apparent “civilization” is on the surface and Bali seems to have learned through a couple of thousand years of foreign influences just how to use and how to ignore those influences. Accustomed to an alien aristocracy, accustomed to successive waves of Hinduism, Buddhism and so on, they let what is alien flow over their heads’ (1977: 174). There is, in other words, a true Bali, ‘a cultural base’ (Bateson and Mead 1942: xiii) underneath the ‘surface’ of foreign ‘influence,’ one that, deep down, withstands change. This stance seems oddly similar to the one that shaped Balinization. Mead did not go

to Bali to shape it, but rather to change America; however, her presuppositions about the ‘essence’ of Bali were not radically different from those of her intellectual predecessors on the island. Dutch intervention was deemed necessary in teaching Balinese ‘how to remain authentic Balinese’ (Pollmann 1990: 14), whereas Mead thought they could do it on their own, but both formulations presuppose that there is such a thing as authentic Balineseness.

How did Mead arrive at her idea of Balineseness? For Mead and Bateson, Bali was the ‘steady state’ *par excellence* (Bateson 1970 [1949]), where ‘*rust en orde*’ (Dutch, ‘calm and order’) prevailed (Robinson 1995: 3, 14-19). However, in an interview with Robinson, I Madé Kaler⁴³ remarked that Mead and Bateson

never wondered what the reason was for all this calm and order. The reason was that all unrest and all criticism was effectively suppressed by the Dutch. But beneath this surface the feelings of bitterness among the Balinese prevailed. Bali was a sleeping tiger. The Balinese are not specially cruel or violent, but it is not surprising that the tiger woke up at last when the Dutch lost power. In particular during the period 1945-1950, and after the coup of 1965 much violence is committed by Balinese against Balinese. To Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson I never talked about what was invisible, but very much alive in Bali. Talking was too dangerous, regarding the Dutch. Margaret Mead herself never broached a political discourse (Pollmann 1990: 19-20).

How did this apparently uninterested attitude translate into Mead and Bateson’s relationships with their objects of study? Mead and Bateson first arrived in Bali on *Nyepi*, the Balinese New Year, ‘when no fires can be lit, no food can be cooked and no one can walk about on the roads’ (Mead 1977: 168). In probably unwitting but dramatic defiance of Balinese cultural injunctions, they drove through an empty island: ‘With no people to distract us, we were able really to see the country itself, as it is hard to do when the road is crowded as far as the eye can reach with picturesque and motley crowds of people and animals’ (Mead 1977: 169). In this passage, people are treated as ‘distractions’ for the observing scholar.

⁴³ Soon after Mead and Bateson arrived in Bali, they ‘found a gifted Balinese boy, I Madé Kaler, who became [their] invaluable secretary’ (Mead 1977: 164).

On another instance, when commenting on the filming for *Trance and Dance in Bali*, all Balinese were described as interchangeable, as essentially the same. ‘The man who made the arrangements decided to substitute young beautiful women for the withered old women who performed at night, and we could record how women who had never before been in trance flawlessly replicated the customary behavior they had watched all their lives’ (Mead 1972: 252-53). In Peircean terms, Balinese are tokens of types, and so have no significance in themselves. Here, all Balinese are merely media through which the scholar can access the basic characteristics of Balineseness, in this instance the schizoid personality. But what is the effect of viewing an entire group of people as essentially undifferentiated, and their one supposedly most important characteristic as their *sole* characteristic? Are the schizoid Balinese, or, as we shall see later, the artistic Balinese, or the theatrical Balinese, entirely human?

This kind of synecdochic thinking, was one of the basic methods with which the new ethnography of the early twentieth century coped with complex wholes. ‘The aim was [...] to get at the whole through one or more of its parts. [...] Parts were assumed to be microcosms or analogies of wholes’ (Clifford 1983: 125). To return to the starting point of this discussion and the issue of summation, in ‘Form and Function of the Dance in Bali,’ Holt and Bateson explored the ‘relationship of the peculiar character of the dance to the character of the people concerned, and to the whole pattern of their culture’ (1944: 55). The idea of ‘pattern’, apart from its visuality, suggests that ‘culture’ is modelled on a pre-existing structure; a metaphor which seems particularly fitting to Holt and Bateson’s emphasis on stylization, according to which actions have meaning only insofar as they correspond to some element of the ‘pattern.’ After describing several filmed dances, they summarized the characteristic features of Balinese dance and associated them to certain features of the Balinese character explained in psychological terms. They concluded with the question of linking stylization in dance with an

enduring psychological trait: '[W]ould not stylized posture and gesture in the dance of a people be relevant to a general psychological trend in their life?' (Holt and Bateson 1944: 63).

This point is worth attention because it is one of a series of remarks that gradually established a strong link between performing arts and representations of Balinese *as a whole*. Jane Belo had already commented on this stylization in everyday life using the much-recycled notion of 'Balinese poise' (1970 [1935]: 86-87). Style, or rather stylization, seems to be a mediating notion between culture and its theatricalization. In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Bateson explicitly connected the absence of climax, which he had previously identified as a fundamental feature of Balinese character (Holt and Bateson 1944: 56), with lack of climax in gamelan and drama (1972: 113). Subsequently, C. Geertz took a further step and moved from merely drawing parallels between character and performance to borrowing performative concepts to provide an articulating metaphor for the rest of Balinese life: in *Person, Time and Conduct in Bali*, he translated *lek* (usually translated as 'shame') as 'stage-fright' (1966: 58). He subsequently stretched this idea to an extreme with his notion of the theatre-state in *Negara* (Geertz 1980a).

Geertz, however, was an anthropologist whose stated purpose was to undertake 'thick' and 'actor-oriented' descriptions of other people's 'cultures' (1973: 14), in an approach which resembles what I have described earlier as bi-discursivity:

What [an actor-oriented approach] means is that descriptions of Berber, Jewish, or French culture must be cast in terms of the constructions we imagine Berbers, Jews, or Frenchmen to place upon what they live through, the formulae they use to define what happens to them. What it does not mean is that such descriptions are themselves Berber, Jewish, or French—that is, part of the reality they are ostensibly describing; they are anthropological—that is, part of a developing system of scientific analysis. They must be cast in terms of the interpretations to which persons of a particular denomination subject their experience, because that is what they profess to be descriptions of; they are anthropological because it is, in fact, anthropologists who profess them (Geertz 1973: 15).

This account may, at first, seem similar to what I have proposed to do in this study, namely to consider Balinese accounts of their own practices as the basis for research, and to contrast them with existing approaches. Then, if this is what scholarship on Bali has been doing since 1980, what can my study possibly contribute? To answer this question, I wish to interrogate how Geertz approached the notion of theatre in his definition of nineteenth-century Bali as a ‘theatre state’ (1980a). How did he decide upon the increasing use of a theatrical image through which to understand much of what happened in nineteenth-century Bali?

Geertz argued for putting ‘the ethnographic [approach] at the center of [his] analysis’ (1980a: 7). The ethnographic approach was defined as such: ‘[O]ne can describe and analyze in some detail the structure and functioning of a current (or recent) system that one has some reason to believe bears at least a familial resemblance to those one seeks to reconstruct, illuminating the more remote by the light of the less’ (Geertz 1980a: 6). Following this reasoning, he used ‘recent Bali [...] to shed light on Indonesia’s distant past’ (Geertz 1980a: 71). So Geertz attempted to do ethnography of the past, basically arguing that retrojection can stand in for history, when one ‘has some reason to believe’ that similarities between present and past systems are sufficient. However, the assumption that a system must be in place remained unchallenged.

Geertz did note some of the methodological fallacies of this approach, namely, viewing Bali as a ‘museum’ of pre-colonial ‘Indonesia’ (1980a: 7), ‘Indonesia’ itself being an anachronistic term here, basing the evidence for social practices or cultural forms in Java on evidence from Bali (1980a: 7), and assuming the uniformity of Indonesia, past or present (Geertz 1980a: 8). But even if we put aside such methodological issues, as well as the persistence of assumptions around light and visibility explored earlier, are we then to assume that Geertz used theatrical evidence from contemporary Bali to arrive at his notion of the

‘theatre’ state? If so, what were the practices he identified as ‘theatrical’ and what is the referent of ‘theatre’?

Consider the following passage:

The *expressive* nature of the Balinese state was apparent through the whole of its known history, for it was always pointed not toward tyranny, whose systematic concentration of power it was incompetent to effect, and not even very methodically toward government, which it pursued indifferently and hesitantly, but rather toward *spectacle*, toward *ceremony*, toward the *public dramatization* of the ruling obsessions of Balinese *culture*: social inequality and status pride. It was a *theatre state* in which the kings and princes were the *impresarios*, the priests the *directors*, and the peasants the *supporting cast, stage crew, and audience*. The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages, and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. *Power served pomp*, not pomp power (Geertz 1980a: 13; emphases added).

What, though, is the ‘nature of the Balinese state’ ‘expressive’ of? This is a more general issue, mentioned briefly earlier, which I shall examine in more detail in Chapter Six. For the time being, I shall concentrate on the particular use of dramatic terminology to describe the Balinese state. What is the exact relationship between the various terms employed here?

‘Theatre,’ ‘public dramatization,’ ‘spectacle,’ ‘ceremony,’ and ‘pageant’ (Geertz 1980a: 13) and later ‘extravaganza’ (Geertz 1980a: 102) are used interchangeably and rather unquestioningly, much as they were by Mead and Bateson. However, Geertz did not explain the grounds for using these terms as a coherent set, nor did he justify the implications of the coherence. Also, he did not elaborate on what relationship this set held to Balinese ideas, which is imputed by his definition of ethnography. The dubious correspondence between the Balinese nineteenth-century polity, current Balinese practices, and the practices of ‘impresarios,’ a term originating in the socioeconomic world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian opera (Rosselli 1984), remained vague, as did the way a reader was expected

to understand the metaphor ‘it was a theatre state’ quoted above. What is the precise relationship between the tenor (the Balinese polity) and its vehicle (theatre)? It is unclear whether they are to be compared, and if so, with whose referents, from what historical and geographical contexts. Alternatively, if these terms are to be considered equal, taken as exact representations of the other, this would close down the discussion about Bali, rather than open it up to further dialogue. Would the study of theatre suffice to understand Balinese politics, then? And what theatre would that be; whose, where, and when?

Building on this, Geertz described palace architecture as follows:

Designed for different functions, but roughly similar in shape and layout, *the various regions are stages, or arenas*, on which the head-on status encounters, which form the substance of political life, are punctiliously played out. [...] More than anywhere else in classical Bali, more than the village, more than the household, more even than the temple, the palace (which was, of course, a bit of all of these, plus something of a *coliseum*) was where the *vanities* of Bali all came together, the conflux of the *pretensions* upon which the society turned (1980a: 116; emphases added).

The terms ‘stages,’ ‘arenas,’ and ‘coliseum’ come from vastly different historical periods, and are attached to particular sets of connotations. Are we to infer that all of these, or any of them, are the best descriptors of Balinese practices of politics?⁴⁴

The image is further confused when Geertz mixes his dramatic metaphors with musical ones:

But, as with most Balinese rituals, these central events were bracketed on the one side by a long *crescendo* of gettings ready and on the other

⁴⁴ Further questions, although unanswerable, might serve to disrupt the flow of Geertz’s prose and probe the basis of his argument: Is one to assume that both the generic notion of a ‘stage’ and the Greco-Roman idea of an ‘arena,’ are equally appropriate? Also, does ‘arena’ here refer to the Latin *harena*, meaning ‘sand’ and a ‘sand-strewn place of combat’ (see *Oxford English Dictionary* 2010) or to contemporary arena theatres? Or is it a metaphorical arena, as in ‘the arena of politics’? And how are we to pair these with the earlier references to eighteenth-century Italian opera, or the later ones to ‘*mise-en-scène*’ (Geertz 1980a: 116)? Is the referent of the latter nineteenth-century French practices of theatre direction, or is it film theory and practice, where it remains, in fact, rather vague and largely undefined (Henderson 1976: 315)? Does either have anything to do with Balinese practices of performance, of which there is no trace in *Negara*? And how are we to understand ‘vanities’ and ‘pretensions’? Is ‘vanity’ to be understood as a fundamental aspect of theatre? The French director and theatre educator Jacques Copeau (1879-1949) called the Comédie Française a ‘monument to vanity’ (quoted in Rudlin 1986: 118). Are we to understand Balinese politics as a version of the Comédie Française? Or is the reference to vanity rather more Christian, where ‘all is vanity’: ‘*vanitas vanitatum dixit Ecclesiastes, vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas*’ (Ecclesiastes 1:2)?

by a dying fall of finishings-up. It was almost as much in the *prologue* (the constructing of the paraphernalia, the putting together of the offerings, the organizing of the feasts) and in the *reprise* (the obsessive reenactments, with effigies, ashes, designs, or flowers, of the burning of the corpse) as in the ceremony proper that the significance of the affair seems to have lain (1980a: 117; emphases added).

Two kinds of questions arise. The first involves, again, the issue of terminology and figures of speech. Are terms such as ‘prologue,’ ‘crescendo,’ and ‘reprise,’ largely foreign to Balinese music (Wakeling 2010), relevant? What motivated their use? Is this, perhaps, part of the consistent post-1920s identification of Bali with a foreign imagining of the arts? Can his usage be justified by the state of Theatre and Performance Studies when Geertz wrote *Negara*? I shall examine this possibility in the following chapter.

The second set of questions relates to the political implications of the metaphorical use of language. The Balinese king of Mengwi was described as ‘an end-game chess king left without pawns or pieces’ (Geertz 1980a: 11). But this was potentially true of all Balinese lords. ‘Each lord, at whatever level and on whatever scale, sought to distance himself from his nearest rivals by expanding his ceremonial activity, turning his court into a nearer Majapahit and himself into a nearer god. But as he did so he laid himself open to becoming a locked-in chess king, separated from the intricacies of power mongering by the requirements of his own pretensions: a pure sign’ (Geertz 1980a: 133).⁴⁵ Balinese politics are described in terms of a loosely defined kind of theatre, or, alternatively, as a game in which the most important piece is also the weakest. However, Geertz did not put forward any evidence to justify these metaphors. So the question of why—and indeed how—Balinese went through all the trouble of putting together these elaborate spectacles, if the king was, in fact, powerless.

⁴⁵ Does this presuppose that Balinese have an account of signs and signification that is sufficiently close to semiotics? If they do not, then Geertz was here asking Balinese to be semiotic in someone else’s frame of reference. As Balinese have a highly developed vocabulary for judging what we would call signs and symbols (Hobart 1999), *prima facie* there are potentially serious problems.

Geertz's work has been repeatedly criticized for his representation of Balinese politics (Schulte Nordholt 1986; Tambiah 1985; Hobart 2000), but rarely (see Hobart 1983) on the grounds of his chosen metaphor. As I mentioned earlier, even Schulte Nordholt, in his critique of Geertz's theory of the theatre-state, titled his section on Balinese geography 'The stage' and discussed it as a 'setting' (1996: 15). Interestingly, Schulte Nordholt later made several references to 'theatre' and 'dance performances' in various courts (1996: 85, 122, 182 [where dancing was a means for local ruler Agung Kerug to entertain Controleur J.H. Liefcrinck while discussing 'recent political developments'], 304) but failed to make any connection between these and the idea of a theatre-state.

One incident is particularly telling: Schulte Nordholt remarked on a dance performed by Dewa Agung, the ruler of Klungkung, at a ceremony in 1939, where the Resident of Bali and Lombok was representing the colonial state: 'That night the Dewa Agung performed for the guests a warrior's dance (*baris*). This dance exemplified kingship under the colonial regime. It was theatre, portraying an illusion' (Schulte Nordholt 1996: 322). The last sentence summarily repeated Geertz's idea of the theatre-state, albeit transposed into the colonial era. In doing so, Schulte Nordholt accepted Geertz's questionable assumptions about theatre as well as about the status of 'illusions' in Bali. He then continued: 'Some informants from Blahkiuh still recall this dance. "It was not beautiful," one of them said (as a child the Dewa Agung had damaged his knee during the *puputan*⁴⁶ of Klungkung, and limped), "but the fact that the Dewa Agung did come to dance was quite an honour"' (Schulte Nordholt 1996: 322 n.180). This episode remained, however, completely unanalyzed. First, the unnamed

⁴⁶ The *puputan*, or 'ending' refers to the episodes surrounding the Dutch taking of control over the island. After they gained power over North Bali, through the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch attempted to consolidate their power by taking over the south in the early 1900s. In 1906 and 1908 the royal families of Badung and Klungkung responded to Dutch troops with a series of ritual mass suicides. The Dutch did prevail, but the European outcry that ensued necessitated a particularly delicate handling of the subsequent image-making policies of the Dutch administration, which may be partly relevant to the focus placed on Balinese culture and on the re-invention of Bali as a much sought-after artistic paradise for tourists and expatriates.

informants' motives for saying what they did went unquestioned. Moreover, if the theatre state was more than pomp, as Schulte Nordholt claimed contrary to Geertz, the author missed an opportunity to analyze the social and power relations that could be part of a theatrical performance under colonial rule. What did the limping Dewa Agung, his kingship half-restored by the Dutch (Schulte Nordholt 1996: 322), assert with his performance, if not to the colonizers, then to his antagonizers (like Gusti Putu Mayun, who was denied self-rule by the Dutch and was treated as an official), and his subjects, who 'still recall' his dance? What better image is there for a half-restored king than a limping one?

In other words, what does identifying Balinese politics with theatre, art, music, or chess, and then ignoring instances where 'theatre' might actually have something to do with power, accomplish? In summary, Geertz's description of pre-colonial Bali as a theatre-state, that is a state governed through spectacle (1980a), begs the question of what Balinese understand by spectacle, such that they could be governed through it. Geertz argued that kingship consisted of an empty theatricality, with Balinese rulers being not powerful agents but mere symbols of power. I think that Geertz's analysis suggested that this lack of power on the part of Balinese rulers is to be seen as the reason why Bali was finally colonized. However, this view leaves no room for an explanation of 'how Bali ran successful slaving and colonial polities, or withstood the Dutch for so long' (Hobart 2000: 242). Geertz's theatrical metaphor could be seen as a disarticulation of inconveniences, papering over violence, Balinese as well as Dutch, eliminating dialogue, as in tableaux, or limiting it to a pre-conceived script, thus bearing no relationship to how Balinese set about their own performance practices. It may be useful to recall here I Madé Kaler's explanation of the apparent 'calm and order' in Bali as a result of Dutch suppression, or of his hesitation in talking 'about what was invisible, but very much alive in Bali' (Pollmann 1990: 19-20; also cross-ref. 215 and 245-246 on the notion of *niskala*). Perhaps the representation of Bali as

theatre, or as chess, is not really a metaphor; euphemism might be a more appropriate figure of speech.

In this chapter, I explored some of the key concepts various scholars used in examining Bali and Balinese culture and the questions they sought to answer, in order to consider the epistemological and ontological claims made by these studies. In the latter part of the chapter, ‘theatre’ arose as a central notion with which to summarize Balinese politics and Balinese as a whole. Three major tendencies emerged: the emphasis on expressions involving light as a visual metaphor for knowledge that consistently hierarchized the knower over the known; the circularity of essentialist arguments for the preservation of culture; and the use of Balinese theatre or dance as a medium for the study of a different object, such as character or politics.

In considering Geertz’s treatment of the subject, a new set of questions emerged, regarding the background against which Geertz wrote *Negara*. In the following chapter, I shall argue that Bali had already been peddled as an exotic paradise of temples, art, dances and theatre. How did theatre take such a central position? And where do studies that took theatre as their stated object of study, rather than as a summative notion, as in Geertz’s case, or as a medium for the study of something else, as in Mead’s and Bateson’s case, stand? What questions are they answering, and what presuppositions do they hold?

Chapter Four: Foreign Imaginings of Balinese Theatre

In Chapter Three, I considered the epistemological and ontological implications of various studies on Bali, culminating with Geertz's introduction of theatre as a central notion with which to summarize Bali and the Balinese polity. So new questions emerged: What is the role that Bali came to play in Western accounts of theatre? What was the background against which Geertz wrote *Negara*? So far I have investigated the presuppositions and assumptions held by scholars of Bali whose interest in 'theatre' was merely incidental to some wider enquiry. But how have Euro-American theatre scholars, practitioners and expatriates⁴⁷ treated Balinese theatre and dance as an object of study in itself, rather than a metaphor or a medium through which to study something else, such as politics or character? What did they represent as theatre or dance and theatre and dance *as*? How have these representations changed and under what circumstances? I wish to highlight the dialogue taking place between different and successive positions, while considering the political, social, and economic circumstances under which different scholars, practitioners, or interested parties have enunciated various formulations of Balinese theatre and dance. This chapter does not aim to address the history of theatre and dance in Bali, because that would be a misrecognition of my object of study, which is the history of representations of Balinese practices *as* theatre or dance, and their implications.

First, I would like to investigate what the various scholars mean by theatre, and how they construe the relationship between theatre (and other related terms, like drama) and dance. *Topèng*, for instance, has been described as all three of these terms by different writers: for R.M. Moerdowo (1977) it was masked dance, for John Emigh (1996; Emigh, McMullen and Richmond 2009) it is masked theatre, for Margaret Coldiron (2004) it is

⁴⁷ I am addressing foreigners' accounts before Balinese and other Indonesians' because of the hegemony of colonial representations and their subsequent reinvention.

masked dance-drama. So there seems to be either disagreement or confusion about the most suitable term to describe the same practice. However, since Balinese are not concerned with the taxonomy of *Topèng* (cross-ref. Chapter Eight), perhaps the question is not one of discovering the best terminology, which would be assuming a universal commensurability between terms and practices, but of examining the conditions under which and the purposes for which various scholars have chosen to represent Balinese practices *as* dance/drama/dance-drama/theatre. In other words, the question, following Goodman (1978: 66-67), is not *what* is dance or theatre, but *when*, and also why, how, and for whom. Or, taking this one step further in order to de-naturalize these terms as the self-evident way to represent Balinese practices: under what conditions do discussions of dance, drama, and theatre become possible and articulable?

The case of Balinese dance may prove telling in spelling out what is at issue. Early European writings about Bali presented the island and its people as warlike, ‘full of menace, an island of theft and murder, symbolized by the wavy dagger of the Malay world, the kris’ (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 26). However, with the Dutch colonization and the development of cultural tourism, Bali was reinvented as a paradise (Vickers 2012 [1989]; Picard 1996b). In the 1920s, the Dutch organized weekly cultural events to attract visitors to the island. However, according to Michel Picard, ‘existing Balinese theatre’ was unsuitable for international visitors for reasons of duration, odd singing, unfamiliar stories and lengthy Balinese (and so unintelligible) dialogue (1996a: 135). So these performances had to be radically reimagined as dance in order to suit their new audiences: ‘Balinese dances acquired the prestige that they have today only after becoming tourist attractions’ (Picard 1996a: 135). In addition, a careful examination of the available sources about pre-conquest Balinese dance suggest that ‘[t]he image of traditional Balinese villages as full of beautiful young dancing maidens and throbbing gamelans is anachronistic’ (Hobart 2007: 122), not least because it

distorts the economic conditions of extreme poverty in which these villages existed. What were the motivations behind such representations?

Hobart argued that ‘most of what we know as dance in Bali emerged to meet foreign tastes’ (2007: 115). The dances invented during this period are called in Indonesian *tari lepas*, which means ‘free dance,’ i.e. ‘dance detached from all the contexts of its cultural performance, then branded and franchised as uniquely and authentically Balinese’ (Hobart 2007: 115). However, an examination of histories of Balinese dance suggests that these may ‘tell us more about the preoccupations of the authors than what might, or might not, have happened’ (Hobart 2007: 112). For instance, ‘Soedarsono provides a long and magnificent history for Balinese dance, stretching way back to the pre-Hindu-Buddhist epoch [...]. He offered no evidence for his dates. And his account was driven by the demands of the project of a nationalist history, which required a long and distinguished pedigree for dance’ (Hobart 2007: 111). Interestingly, Java was pinpointed as the source of much of Balinese dance, while ‘the older texts cited are Javanese (as indeed were scholars like Soedarsono and Moerdowo)’ (Hobart 2007: 112; also cross-ref. 159-164).

Furthermore, when one considers Balinese dance, the issue of religion regularly arises, and many ‘Balinese indeed now often say that religion and performance are inextricable’ (Hobart 2007: 110), while Balinese dance and theatre are often represented as rituals (e.g. *Calonarang*) or as offerings (e.g. *Réjang Déwa* or *Wayang Lemah*). Indeed *Réjang Déwa*, which has now become a standard for temple ceremonies in many Balinese villages (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 56), and ‘which many villagers swear is primordial [...] was choreographed in 1988 by Swasti Wijaya Bandem from STSI [the Indonesian Academy of Arts, later ISI, the Institute of Arts]’ (Hobart 2007: 110). This poses questions about what it is that is represented as religion (see Fox 2002), offering, or ritual, when, according to whom,

and for what purposes, while it defers the analytical problems posed by the potential incommensurability between Balinese practices and their scholarly representation.

Hobart argued that ‘Balinese dance’ is a phenomenon with a distinct history that ‘involved the determined and meticulous stripping out of singing, dialogue, narrative, philosophy, and historical and cultural elements, which marked theatre at least as scholars knew it from the 1930s on’ (2007: 109). He juxtaposed dance with theatre, which he took as ‘the kinds of dramatic stories Balinese performed for themselves’ (Hobart 2007: 115) and which ‘remained largely unregulated, feral and popular among Balinese themselves’ (2007: 109). As such, theatre was beyond the scope and purposes of Hobart’s article on ‘Rethinking Balinese Dance’ (2007). However, in this chapter, I pose similar questions about ‘Balinese theatre’: rather than treating it as an unproblematic and self-evident entity, I examine whether there is a similarly complex history of representing Balinese practices *as* theatre. And if so, what was theatre represented *as*, by whom, to whom, under what conditions, what purposes, and, significantly, in what medium? To what extent is mediation constitutive of dance and theatre as an object of study, and yet regularly treated as innocent and transparent? What are the implications of such articulations?

Bali as an Example of a Generic Orient

In this section, I examine early representations of Bali and Balinese theatre by Westerners whose interest in the island and what they described as its culture—of which theatre was but a part, complemented by art and religion—was not, or not purely, academic.

By the time Geertz reached the thesis of the ‘theatre-state,’ Bali had already been proclaimed and marketed by the Indonesian Committee of the New York World’s Fair of 1964-65 as an ‘Isle of Temples and Dances’ (Anonymous 1964-65), ‘the island of dance, the island of gods’ (Chegaray 1955: 9), where travellers had found ‘these so-called primitive

people to be inherently artistic. For centuries they have made a cult of beauty' (Yates 1933: 62). In the previous chapters I identified a series of notions to articulate Bali: it was Sanskrit, traditional, and in need of preservation. Boon's *The Anthropological Romance of Bali* (1977), Vickers' *A Paradise Created* (1989, second edition in 2012), Robinson's *The Dark Side of Paradise* (1995) and Picard's *Cultural Tourism and Touristic Culture* (1996b) have undone the myth of Bali as a harmonious paradise, and brought to the fore the political and economic implications of colonial and later marketing of Bali's tourist-friendly image. What was at issue in this shift of articulatory focus and in whose interests was it? What have been the consequences of this re-articulation for Balinese actors and for theatre scholars? In this section, I argue that there is a parallel yearning in twentieth-century European theatre that, although fuelled and facilitated by colonialism, also provided the framework within which colonial claims about culture and civilization could be reiterated.

The figure often attributed with much of the responsibility for this re-articulation of Bali was Walter Spies (1895-1942), a Russian-German artist who lived in Bali from 1927 until his death (Wesner, Hitchcock and Putra 2007: 211).⁴⁸ Spies was 'renowned [...] as a successful artist, photographer and filmmaker, as well as the co-author with Beryl de Zoete of one of the most enduring books written about the island, *Dance and drama in Bali* (1938)' (Wesner, Hitchcock and Putra 2007: 211-212). He contributed photographs for Goris' *The Island of Bali: Its Religion and Ceremonies* (c.1930), and played an important part in the shooting of fiction films set in Bali, such as *Goona-Goona* (1932) and *Insel der Dämonen* (1933). Spies, then, played a major role in the representation of Bali across different media.

⁴⁸ Hobart related Cokorda Gedé Agung Sukawati's account of the Balinese process of responding to Dutch demands of them as such: 'Living opposite the Hotel Bali in Denpasar and through becoming a guide, the Cokorda inferred what Europeans wanted was art. Realising that Balinese could neither yet appreciate nor deliver what the colonial masters wanted, the family decided to lure to Ubud the only foreigner they knew who seemed to have the right qualifications, the then bandmaster to the Sultan of Yogyakarta, a certain Walter Spies. The outcome was a celebrated chapter in the history of the romanticisation of the island' (2007: 115).

Dance and Drama in Bali (de Zoete and Spies 1973 [1938]) covered a wide range of genres, in an attempt to convey ‘the Balinese attitude’ towards their own dramatic arts (de Zoete and Spies 1973 [1938]: 16). What is involved and what presupposed in such an aim? While it may have been commonplace at the time to speak of ‘the Balinese attitude’ in the singular, what were the broader implications of so doing?

In his preface to *Dance and Drama in Bali*, Arthur Waley noted that

[t]he study of European folk-dance has already made considerable progress, and this is due partly to the fact that attention has wisely been confined to Europe and that hasty comparisons have been avoided. Ultimately, however, this arbitrary demarcation will be bound to disappear. The division, for example, between Europe and Asia is based upon Greek mythology, and vast cultural diffusions were already taking place at a far earlier period, when the conceptions ‘Europe’ and ‘Asia’ were still unknown. Nor were such diffusions held up by ribbons, such as the Straits of Gibraltar, which in our modern way of thought mark the boundary between two contrasted worlds (1973: xvii).

What Waley described was a nascent universalism that later dominated studies of theatre and performance in the 1960s and 1970s which sought to discover theatre in its original state (cross-ref. 135-143). In elaborating the importance of de Zoete and Spies’ book, Waley noted that ‘[t]he interest of Bali as it is to-day vastly exceeds that of any possible speculations about the affinities or derivations of its culture. In Bali better than anywhere else can be seen the processes by which dance and drama are linked together; yet in no work on the development of drama had the evidence from Bali hitherto been turned to account’ (1973 [1938]: xvii). Once more, the interest in Bali for scholars and practitioners was found in its mirroring of a prior state in which dance and drama were unified; as it was earlier seen as a ‘pre-conquest Java’ (Boon 1977), it was later presented as a mirror of an ‘Ur’ state of theatre, before its breakdown into (the so often paired) dance and drama. So any subsequent attempt to subsume Balinese dance under the umbrella term of theatre should be suspect of this kind of thinking that sees in Balinese performance practices an imaginary, original ideal.

Spies provided one of the first framings of Bali as ‘Ur’: original, primitive, a sample of the earliest form of an imagined, undifferentiated Orient, untouched by time, and so necessarily ahistorical and apolitical. ‘Bali has long been famous as an earthly paradise in which a favoured race of men live in Utopian harmony with their own kind, with nature, and their gods’ de Zoete and Spies commented (1974 [1938]: 2). However, this ‘long’ is not all that long—in a footnote, de Zoete and Spies qualified it: ‘At least since the publication in 1926 [originally published in 1920] of Krause’s beautifully illustrated book, *Bali; Volk, Land, Tänze, Feste, Tempel*’ (1973 [1938]: 2). First, Krause’s collection is famous for the inclusion of erotic images. These undercurrents of nudity and sexuality suggest that the notion of Bali as paradise is not as innocent as might appear. In addition, what is significant here is, on the one hand, the tendency to regard relatively recent representations of Bali as timeless and essential truths about it, and, on the other, the way in which Bali is at a very early stage set apart as something that can be sufficiently captured visually. There is a contradiction in these terms: ‘timeless and essential’ as against ‘set apart’ are different registers, because if a thing is ‘set apart’ then whatever essence it may have is by default not shared. So in what circumstances and for what purposes was each of these registers employed? In short, what was this knowledge for?

The visibility of representations of Balinese culture, exemplified in Krause’s coupling of ‘Dances, Festivals, Temples,’ is striking, not least because it rests on the assumption that the medium of photography at first, and of video recordings subsequently, is transparent and unproblematic in its depiction of reality. As Nichols remarked, this kind of ethnographic practice that places visibility at its centre as a source of scientific authentication is not unlike pornography, which ‘depends on the authenticity of its sexual representations’ (1991: 163). The affinities between ethnography and pornography do not stop there: Hansen, Needham

and Nichols have established the striking correspondence between these in terms of the ways in which they examine the figure of the Other (1991: 201-28).

For all its claims at authenticity, however, ‘pornography has seldom done anything but represent women⁴⁹ as the objects of male desire’ (Hansen, Needham & Nichols 1991: 201), in a striking parallel with some of the earliest mediations of Bali which have consistently represented it as the object of European desire for an ‘Ur,’ generically Oriental paradise. This enabled each of the elements that constituted Bali—to use Krause’s formulation, its ‘People, Land, Dances, Festivals, Temples’—to become the currency of exoticism in an exchange that excluded Balinese except as artefacts of their culture, imagined through its recordings.

However, both pornography and ethnography ‘depend [...] on narrative and expository realism. [...] To both practices realism brings with it the baggage of a Western tradition that conflates description with representation, information with knowledge, evidence with sight. The description stands in for the described, erasing any gap between form and meaning’ (Hansen, Needham & Nichols 1991: 224). So the parallel with pornography complicates the relationship between the purposes of mediation and the mediated object, which arguably fades into nonexistence once the camera is turned off, and enables one to ask: In what sense does Balinese culture exist if it cannot be recorded and mediated? And what is the relationship between realism and successive representations of Bali?

Competing Representations, Similar Presuppositions

As we saw in Chapter Three, in ‘Dutch colonial circles there was a strong tendency to describe Bali more and more in static and abstract terms. Influenced by the Leiden School of Ethnology [sic] of that time a search for the “Ur”-Bali started’ (Schulte Nordholt 1986: 44). Oriental Bali was based primarily on visual representations of harmony with nature and with

⁴⁹ However, both Balinese women and men were treated as objects of European desire (Hobart 2007: 119). To what extent were all Balinese feminized in European representations?

gods. Spies' representations of Bali were arguably part of this trend. However, it may require some effort to reconcile these accounts of paradisaal Bali with the equally widely circulated photographic record of Mead and Bateson, which presented a very different, if not entirely contradictory, Bali of schizoid culture and repressed conflict.

In both cases, the reasons for the respective representations of Bali may become more intelligible if one considers whom the authors were addressing and what their aims were. I have already discussed Mead and Bateson's aims in the previous chapter (cross-ref. 93-94), but Spies was actively addressing a different readership: he was marketing Bali to the upper classes of the Euro-American world, shaping the personal experiences of distinguished, influential visitors (including Noel Coward, Charlie Chaplin, Vicky Baum, and Miguel Covarrubias) and indeed of Mead and Bateson themselves (Wesner, Hitchcock and Putra 2007: 213), becoming 'a constant source of disinterested information to every archaeologist, anthropologist, musician or artist who has come to Bali' (Covarrubias 1937: xxii). In what sense Spies' representations were in fact 'disinterested' is subject to debate, but what was the result of this reinventing of Bali as 'Ur,' i.e. an entirely transactable and transferrable Orient that was in the right shape to purvey to élite visitors? And even though Spies and Mead and Bateson's conclusions about the essence of Bali might be irreconcilable, were their premises equally so?

De Zoete and Spies claimed that 'the Balinese have a non-resistant way of resisting what does not suit them which is far more powerful than protesting stubbornness, and which has been illustrated by their method of dealing with missions' (Spies 1973 [1938]: 2). This idea was echoed in Mead's comment about Balinese letting 'what is alien flow over their heads' (1977: 174). In addition, the use of 'the' Balinese implies some kind of inherent and authentic Balineseness, and therefore slips from being nominal to creating an essential unity. De Zoete and Spies went on to add that 'even in far more accessible regions *the core* of Bali

remains inviolate. Village custom, known by the Arabic word *Adat*, lies entirely beyond the reach of foreign influence' (de Zoete and Spies 1973 [1938]: 3; emphasis added). It seems, then, that readers are to believe that an Arabic loanword adequately encapsulates 'the core' of Bali. But if Balinese were 'entirely beyond the reach of foreign influence,' how come they designated their own customs using a loan Arabic word?

In a similar vein, de Zoete and Spies compared dance to nature: 'Nature does not make perpetual demands on one's attention, nor does a dance performance on the Balinese. [...] Some one has said that dancing in Bali is not there to be looked at, nor music to be listened to, but both only to be seen and heard like trees and streams in a wood' (1973 [1938]: 16). De Zoete and Spies did not, however, argue that the Balinese propensity to harmony and beauty is natural: 'Yet the Balinese do not live in a charmed insouciance in their fertile and ravishing landscape, nor did this beauty fall upon them like a mantle from on high. They have fashioned Bali out of its original jungle into this incomparable harmony of rice-fields, temples, villages, so different each from the other, yet so characteristically Balinese. The harmony of Balinese life has been *achieved*, it is the expression of an attitude' (1973 [1938]: 3). But how did the Balinese arrive at this attitude, which is 'expressed' in the deliberate and meticulous achievement of beauty? It never became clear whether it was inherent, a social contract, a natural trait, or an externally imposed practice. But de Zoete and Spies maintained that

[w]herever he may be, idle or at work, sitting at home, in the market or the temple, or walking on roads or devious footpaths, squatting naked on a rock in the river in the act of making offerings to the stream, carrying heavy burdens, or playing under the waterspout, cutting down a palm tree or perched without support on its narrow crown still trembling from the shock of decapitation, the Balinese is so perfectly in harmony with his surroundings and so graceful in his *poise* that we almost have the impression of a *dance* (1973 [1938]: 5; emphases added).

The expression of this attitude is, then, quickly given a name: it is dance (cross-ref. 108-110 for the complex issue of dance). However, de Zoete and Spies made a significant qualification:

The subtly graded scale of values which exists in the physical behaviour of the community plays of course a great part in the dancing, but it is not itself dancing. It is indeed only because the trend of our civilization has been in the direction of obliterating forms and ritual behaviour that perfect tempo, measure, and modulation in ordinary movement appears to us to have a choreographic quality, the quality of a design with conscious balance of parts. The Balinese would be amused at the idea that women carrying offerings or six-foot piles of coconuts on their heads had anything to do with women dancing; for dancing is to them something quite different, another mode of being. One must indeed have lived in a strange disorder before coming to look on the harmonious body as a dancing body, and the mere presence of measure in movement as a dance (1973 [1938]: 5-6).

De Zoete and Spies then did remark on everything in Bali being understood as dance, but they made clear who it was that did the understanding, and they neatly undermined their own metaphor by pointing out how ridiculous it would sound to Balinese.

It is therefore worth further inquiry as to why Mead and Bateson and also Geertz, on the other hand, did not go as far as considering the possibility of Balinese having anything to say with regards to their presumed essential and predominant characteristics. De Zoete and Spies' aptness is, I think, particularly evident in the following remark: 'every movement has a name (and *movement* itself, none)' (1973 [1938]: 11). The non-existence of the general category of 'movement,' much as the problem of there being no word for 'theatre' in Balinese, which I noted in the Introduction, hints at a disparity between the modes of knowledge of the knowers and those of the people being studied. If these issues have been convincingly problematized as early as 1938, in one of the most widely cited studies of Balinese theatre, why have later scholars and practitioners insisted on studying Balinese 'movement' and Balinese 'theatre' when these have been shown to be highly problematic, if

not largely nonsensical, in their original context? If an understanding of that context was not the primary goal, then what was the study of Balinese ‘theatre’ *for*?

What is Bali For?

Spies, commenting on a 1933 theatre production by Austrian theatre director Max Reinhardt (1873-1943), formulated a critique of realism in Western theatre:⁵⁰

Reinhart’s much-praised setting of *Faust* at Salzburg was an interesting demonstration of the way in which every effort made to create illusion may only destroy it. [...] We are only beginning to understand, or perhaps to understand again, that stage realism kills illusion; and it is from the East that we are learning. The décor of the Balinese stage is in the mind of the spectators. When one remembers a *Topeng* play, for instance, one remembers the scene which was never on the stage, but only in the story (de Zoete and Spies 1973 [1938]: 15).

So in this discussion, the preoccupation with Bali emerges as, on the one hand, an example, or an exemplification, of a generic and muddled ‘East,’ and, on the other, as an antithesis to, or a rod with which to beat, European theatre. I have already introduced realism as a concern for ethnography (cross-ref. 113-114). But what was the broader discussion of which Spies’ statement above was a part? What were the arguments about realism and its alternatives in early twentieth-century Europe and the United States, and how are these related to ethnographic representations of others, and of Bali in particular?

Theatre historians, such as Paul Kuritz (1988: 311), W.B. Worthen (1992: 12-13) and Phillip Zarrilli (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 302-311), have repeatedly argued that the advent of photography in the mid-nineteenth century created one of the drives that led to demands for a more realistic theatre in Europe and the United States, with Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Johan Strindberg (1849-1912) and Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) leading the way in playwriting, and

⁵⁰ Spies was very much part of the avant-garde art and theatre scene in Europe at the time: He spent his formative years as an artist in Dresden and was informally involved with the school of Hellerau, a cradle of modernist art, music, and dance (Wesner, Hitchcock and Putra 2007). In addition, Spies was acquainted with ‘some of the leading artists and composers of the 1920s,’ including the expressionist film-maker Friedrich Murnau (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 151).

André Antoine (1858-1943) and Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) setting the stage in the increasingly central role of the director. But what exactly was meant by ‘realism,’ and how might the answer to this question be transformed if we take into account the notion that ‘[r]ealism is not a matter of any fidelity to an empirical reality, but of the discursive conventions by which and for which a sense of reality is constructed’ (Fiske 1987: 21)?

In his manifesto/preface to *Miss Julie* (1888), Strindberg described at length the attention given to the complex motives and causes of the characters’ behaviour, which is one of realism’s main characteristics:

So my treatment has not been one-sidedly physiological nor obsessively psychological. I have not attributed everything to what she [Julie] inherited from her mother nor put the whole blame on her period, nor just settled for ‘immorality’, nor merely preached morality—lacking a priest, I’ve left that to the cook! I flatter myself that this multiplicity of motives is in tune with the times. And if others have anticipated me in this, then I flatter myself that I am not alone in my paradoxes, as all discoveries are called (1998 [1888]: 58).

This brings to the fore a striking parallel between Strindberg’s idea of a correspondence between ‘realistic’ representations of life on stage and an accurate description of psychology and character, and Mead and Bateson’s assumptions about a similar correspondence between photographic representations (of both everyday life and ‘theatre’) and ‘the Balinese character.’ Most strikingly, however, both approaches treat the media of representation not merely as transparent, but as revelatory of a hidden essential reality. To what extent, then, were anthropological and theatrical understandings of human psychology and self-presentation in conversation with one another and did they share the same or similar presuppositions?

Theatrical realism reached its apogee with naturalism, with Émile Zola (1840-1902), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946) and Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) in Europe and Eugene

O'Neill (1888-1953) in the USA being its emblematic voices.⁵¹ Zola, in the preface to the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin* noted the perceived connection with science, stating that his 'aim has been, before all other, a scientific one' (2010 [1868]: 3). Then, responding to critics of his work, he wrote:

One thing is certain, the scientific analysis which I have attempted to perform in 'Thérèse Raquin' would not surprise them; they would see in it the modern method, the instrument of universal inquiry of which the century makes such feverish use to penetrate the future. Whatever their conclusion might be, they would admit my point of departure, the study of temperament and of the profound modifications of organism under the pressure of circumstances and situations. I should find myself in the presence of real judges, of men honestly seeking for truth, without puerility or false shame, and not thinking it necessary to show disgust at the sight of bare and living anatomical forms (Zola 2010 [1868]: 5).

A few years later, Zola made the causal relationship he saw between environment and behaviour even clearer: 'By resolving the duplex question of temperament and environment, I shall endeavour to discover and follow the thread of connection which leads mathematically from one man to another. And when I have possession of every thread, and hold a complete social group in my hands, I shall show this group at work, participating in a historical period' (2012 [1871]: no pagination). So what relationship, if any, did Zola's goals and methods bear on those of early twentieth-century social scientists and anthropologists?

Naturalist stagings strived for as faithful a depiction of reality as possible: 'over the course of the nineteenth century stage scenery gradually developed from the painted backcloths of Restoration drama to three-dimensional reproductions of interiors and elaborate

⁵¹ Realism and naturalism are not synonyms. In theatre, realism aimed at 'the presentation of scrupulously observed material realities' and was initially associated with commercial theatre (Zarrilli *et al* 2010: 603). The 'fourth wall,' historically accurate costumes and three-dimensional sets, as well as 'psychological realism' are its major conventions. Naturalism, despite its use of these conventions, was an avant-garde movement seeking the causes of human behaviour in hereditary and environmental factors (Zarrilli *et al* 2010: 600). Philosophically, realism consists of two main aspects: a claim about existence (that things exist), and a claim about independence (that their existence and properties are independent of what anyone might say or think about them) (Miller 2010). Naturalism is philosophically a rather murky concept, resulting from an attempt to bring philosophy closer to science. Naturalism 'urged that reality is exhausted by nature, containing nothing "supernatural," and that the scientific method should be used to investigate all areas of reality, including the "human spirit"' (Papineau 2009). Thus described, theatrical naturalism seems to parallel closely its philosophical counterpart's concern with scientific explanation.

impressions of natural effects. Initially these were used purely for spectacle [... but by the 1860s] such scenic possibilities had become sufficiently familiar not to attract exclusive attention to themselves, and were being used to create a credible physical context for dramatic characters' (Innes 2000: 10). In Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), Nora's door slam 'reverberated across the roof of the world' (Reich 2009: 492)—and although this referred to the implications of a middle-class woman abandoning her husband, it also speaks of the possibilities created by this new approach to stage design and stage action.

However, realism and naturalism ride on the presupposition that reality exists as scientifically measurable, objectively knowable and imitable. This was arguably also the basis of Bateson and Mead's newly-developed approach to media documentation of culture. The problem of representing reality, then, was in both cases merely a matter of technology (set design, lighting, acoustics) and technique (playwriting, directing, acting). Zola, in particular, believed that '[y]ou cannot claim to have really seen something until you have photographed it' (quoted in Sontag 1977: 87). But how does photography complement Zola's search for the motives, environmental factors, and heredity that made up his characters' behaviour, or the call to not shy away from the bare human anatomy? And what is the relationship with the 'complex structure in dominance' (Hall 1980: 128) involved in the production of media and the 'institutional/political/ideological order imprinted' (Hall 1980: 134) in their preferred reading (cross-ref. 55-56)?

Zola's stance towards photography reflects something of the attitudes and practices of visual anthropology at the time (Pinney 2011), while this attitude was echoed in Mead and Bateson's photographic work, which they saw as 'objective' records of such otherwise unseen (and unseeable) states as trance and spirit-possession. Both Zola's literary and theatrical naturalism and ethnographic film's scientific pretences eschew the issue of mediation and representation, while 'the criteria of scientific investigation butt up against the

narrative, poetic, expressive, and subjective dimensions’ of the work (Hansen, Needham & Nichols 1991: 201). In addition, both approaches rest on a series of assumptions: The question of audiences and what they might make of realistic, naturalistic, or scientific works has not so far come up in any of the examined contexts. The exclusion of audiences as autonomous and anything more than mere reflections of producers’, directors’, or actors’ imaginations in turn hinges on the assumption that the preferred reading (cross-ref. 55-56) is pre-accepted and that both the encoding of reality into representation (i.e. ‘the transparency fallacy’ [see Fiske 1987: 21]) and the decoding are unproblematic (Hall 1980). The latter also takes for granted the idea that there is a single shared code at all. In light of the above, what does unqualified ‘objectivity’ mean, and what is it for?

Fiske argued that the notion of objectivity resolves into what the narrative and pictorial conventions of the researcher deem familiar (1987: 290-291) and that notions of power and ideology are never far from what appears (to whom?) to be familiar, natural, or self-evident. In other words, ‘[o]bjectivity is the “unauthored” voice of the bourgeoisie’ (Fiske 1987: 289). So taking into consideration this questioning of reality and objectivity, what was it that, as Spies put it (cross-ref. 118), European theatre imagined it could learn from the East in general, and from Bali in particular, at the time? And to what extent was the study of theatre in Bali a bourgeois pursuit?

Bali as an Antithesis to European Theatre

Several European theatre practitioners and visionaries had started searching for a new theatricality in early twentieth century, often in denial of photography’s ability to convey reality, to which colonial representations of an imaginary Asia in general and of Bali in particular (an Asia and a Bali imagined and represented mainly through photography and film, the ability of which to convey reality in this case was, ironically, never questioned)

eventually presented a suitable alternative. Gustave Kahn (1859-1936), in the first manifesto of theatrical symbolism, argued that it was necessary for actors to reject ‘words and multiply their gestures’ (1889: 350) in order to make it impossible for the author to ‘impose his dramatic language’ (1889: 344). Previously a proponent of naturalism, Hauptmann openly rejected naturalism in favour of symbolism and turned to adaptations of myths and legends (Furness 1982: 86). Even Strindberg, a former realist, produced a cycle of chamber plays that incorporated symbolist spirituality and foreshadowed the anti-realist techniques of grotesque scenery, exaggerated movement, and strong emotions that became the hallmark of German expressionism (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 363). What was it that these European practitioners were reacting to and how did representations of Asia come to provide them with an alternative? It is possible that they were beginning to appreciate the theatricality of ‘reality,’ in radical contrast to the pseudo-scientific claims to objectivity made by anthropologists and those who claimed that the mass media could represent reality. If so, this would be a valuable contribution of theatrical *discours* to Social or Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Studies.

Kahn stated that (self-identifying) symbolists, ‘tired of the everyday, the near-at-hand’ strived to ‘objectify the subjective,’ to fight ‘the battle of feelings and Ideas’ (Kahn 1886: no pagination). As Zarrilli put it, they urged viewers ‘to look through the photo-like surface of appearances to discover more significant realities within’ (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 358). But rather than moving towards a critique of representation (see Goodman 1978), several symbolists opted instead for an easy exoticism: the emphasis on gestures, the rejection of the predominance of the word and the turn towards the expression of the hidden realities within, was coupled with a yearning for the far-away and the exotic, as opposed to the everyday and near-at-hand that Kahn berated. Meyerhold (1874-1940), a proponent of symbolism in Russia, soon moved towards forms of theatricality inspired by *Commedia dell’Arte* and developed his training method (biomechanics) based on rhythm and stylization (Pitches 2003:

8-20). In 1935, Meyerhold attended a performance by Beijing Opera actor Mei Lanfang (1894-1961) and was reportedly impressed by ‘his physical and rhythmical expressiveness’ (Leach 1989: 171). The same performance was attended by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and it was then that he first formulated the idea of the famous ‘alienation’ or ‘distancing effect’ (*Verfremdungseffekt*) (Leach 1989: 171), while various representations of an idealized Asia served both as a distancing tool and an aesthetic in his later work. These two terms seem to move in quite different directions, as the distancing invites reflection on who does the representing and under what conditions, whereas the aesthetic tends to justify unquestioningly stereotypes and prejudices. However, in Brecht’s case, and despite the fact that Brecht found the model for his distancing techniques in Chinese theatre (see 1961), an Asian aesthetic as a distancing tool, in, for instance, *The Good Person of Szechwan* (1943), was meant to expose the performance *as* theatre rather than as illusion and so to invite the spectators to reflect on their own political, social, and economic conditions. So a critique of the representations of Asia on stage or its political and other implications was never part of the objective.

Even though many European practitioners were in conversation with Asian forms, they had quite different reactions and motivations. Brecht, as I argued above, used the Orient as a tool with which to beat domestic practice. In the 1889 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, Claude Debussy saw a Javanese gamelan ensemble and was struck by its pentatonic scales, being astonished at a quite different way of conceiving music (Lesure & Howat 2011; Sorrell 1992).⁵² In yet a different strand, Copeau (1879-1949), a theatre critic turned director, in reaction to what he perceived as the superficiality of the French star-system, launched a new

⁵² A detailed discussion of every European artist that was in some way inspired by Asian forms would fill several volumes, which should include Stanislavski’s inspiration from yoga in his later work (see Tcherkasski 2012), W. B. Yeats’s *Noh*-inspired plays (*At the Hawk’s Well*, performed in 1917, and *The Death of Cuchlain*, written in 1939), or the fascination with Asia revealed in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* (first performed in 1885) or Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* (first performed in 1904). I limit myself here to the ones that are either directly connected to Bali or to the ideals that Bali came to represent, in an attempt to trace the genealogy of more recent and current imaginings of Bali and Balinese culture.

company and school, emphasizing the actors' physicality. Copeau trained his actors in the countryside in an effort to de-urbanize the actors' bodies and to liberate them from the corrosion of town life (Rudlin 1986: 39), in the same line of thought, as I shall argue later, that saw the Balinese way of life threatened by modernity. In 1924, Copeau's apprentice group produced a revival of *Kantan*, a classical Japanese Noh play (Evans 2006: 28). The move from this idea of innocent, rural life to Asia was easy, because the identification of that pre-modern, paradisaical state of being with the Orient, in this case Japan (despite it being one of the most prominent military and industrial powers of the world at the time [see Hill 1983: 410]) had already been established as one of the oldest clichés being recycled.⁵³ It was against this background of provincial concerns, and of a rather inchoate but highly charged vision of Asia that Artaud saw Balinese theatre in the 1931 Paris Colonial exposition, which Spies helped set up (Vickers 1989: 108). Granted the importance of Bali to Artaud's thinking about theatre in general, Artaud's engagement with Balinese theatre requires further comment. It is also curious how quite different themes underpin Deleuze and Guattari analysis in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand plateaus* (1987), where Artaud's 'schizoid' thinking and Bateson's vision of Bali as a society striving towards achieving plateaus become central themes in a critique of capitalism.

Artaud

Artaud (1896-1949) started out as a surrealist exploring the unconscious in playwriting and on stage at the *Théâtre Alfred Jarry* (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 367), but is more often cited for his manifestos on what he called 'theatre of cruelty,' which were written during the 1930s and published in *The Theatre and its Double* (1938), and which included an account of his encounter with Balinese theatre in the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition. This has given rise to

⁵³ The idea of Asia as innocent is also part of a fractured and contradictory vision in which Asians are also fiendishly cunning and cruel (Said 1978: 4; 38). See, for instance, Sax Rohmer's *Fu Manchu* series of novels (from 1913-) and films (1923 in the UK and 1929- in the United States).

much controversy and is almost compulsively mentioned in almost every contemporary study of intercultural performance, the European avant-garde, and Asian performance genres in the West. However, Artaud is rarely cited⁵⁴ for his impact on French thought: His radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947) introduced the phrase ‘body without organs’⁵⁵ which initially re-appeared in Deleuze’s *The Logic of Sense* (2004 [1969]), according to whom Artaud’s formulation denoted a new usage of language, one which transformed ‘the word into an action by rendering it incapable of being decomposed and incapable of disintegrating: *language without articulation*’ (Deleuze 2004 [1969]: 101-102), ‘illegible and even unpronounceable’ (Deleuze 2004 [1969]: 102). The revolutionary potential of Artaud’s work became even more evident when the ‘Body without Organs’ later formed a major part of Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of capitalism in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (consisting of *Anti-Oedipus* [1972] and *A Thousand Plateaus* [1987]), becoming a term used in a variety of senses, ranging from a description of the de-stratified self, to the assemblages of practices on which social organizations hinge and depend, while at the same time denying their dependency. In light of this important contribution, how have scholars of Theatre and Performance Studies engaged with Artaud’s encounter with, and account of, Balinese theatre?

Dan Rebellato opened his book on theatre and globalization with a section entitled ‘Artaud at the Balinese Theatre’:

Artaud’s encounter with the Balinese theatre at the Colonial Exposition in Paris is one of the most celebrated and controversial encounters in modern European theatre. In recent years, theatre scholars have tended to consider it an instance of theatrical ‘interculturalism’: the contested and controversial history of Western theatre’s attempt to co-opt (usually) Asian theatre forms to

⁵⁴ There are exceptions; most recently Laura Cull’s ‘How Do You Make Yourself a Theatre without Organs? Deleuze, Artaud and the Concept of Differential Presence’ (2009), which, however, engaged mostly with Deleuze and Guattari’s possible contributions to theatrical practice rather than Artaud’s writing on Bali.

⁵⁵ The relevant line from the radio play: ‘When you will have made him [man] a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom’ (Artaud 1947: 571).

reinvigorate its own culture. But since then another term has come into use which might also provide a way of thinking through the relationship between the theatre and the world: ‘globalization’ (2009: 3).

Arguably, Artaud here was used as an excuse to talk about something else, while ‘Balinese theatre’ was taken as a representative of the vague category of ‘Asian theatre forms.’ Indeed, the idea that Balinese theatre can be substituted by or for something else with little, if any, consequence is not new. Savarese argued that

Artaud was in fact not interested in Balinese culture; he used the Balinese performance because its extraneousness to his own culture made it possible for him to delineate a difference. Artaud, finally, did not want to increase knowledge about Balinese dance but to use it to create a short-circuit. [...] Artaud’s journey clearly reveals that his ultimate objective not only was to renew Occidental theatre but also to change completely the culture on which it was based. Artaud’s return to sources, to magical and primitive thought, to myths distant from the Occidental rationality that separates words from things, is fuelled by this ambition (2001:71).

According to this account, Artaud used Balinese theatre as a tool with which to strike and revolutionize the theatre of Europe, because the Balinese dancers embodied everything that most practitioners mentioned in the previous section had identified as lacking in European theatre: physicality, rigorous training, a visceral symbolism that turned the performers’ bodies into ‘true hieroglyphs that live and move’ (Artaud 1964 [1931]: 93).⁵⁶ But they also provided a glimpse of a much deeper lack: ‘And these three-dimensional hieroglyphs are in their turn adorned with a certain number of gestures, of mysterious signs that correspond to who knows what fabulous and obscure reality that we others, the people of the West, have definitively repressed’ (Artaud 1964 [1931]: 93).⁵⁷ Extending the perception of this shortcoming of ‘the West,’ Artaud sought, according to popular readings, to overthrow not only ‘Occidental’ theatre, but Occidental society altogether (see Jannarone 2012: 1-28).

⁵⁶ See Appendix A, note 4.1.

⁵⁷ See Appendix A, note 4.2.

In a similar line of thought, Sontag, in an introduction to Artaud's collected writings, suggested that, for Artaud, any 'other' culture could have stimulated the same reaction: 'The inspiration for Artaud's ideas about theater came from Southeast Asia: from seeing the Cambodian theater in Marseilles in 1922 and the Balinese theater in Paris in 1931. But the stimulus could just as well have come from observing the theater of a Dahomey tribe or the shamanistic ceremonies of the Patagonian Indians. What counts is that the other culture be genuinely other; that is, non-Western and non-contemporary' (Sontag 1976: xxxix). Sontag did not present evidence to support this idea, other than that this was the general attitude towards other cultures in Europe at the time. More importantly, her dismissal of Artaud's vision of a cultural revolution was based, at least in part, on his dismissal of politics and his rejection of Surrealism when Breton attempted to link it to Marxism (Sontag 1976: xli). It is only later in her introduction that her objectives became clearer: 'In modern culture, powerful machinery has been set up whereby dissident work, after gaining an initial semi-official status as "avant-garde," is gradually absorbed and rendered acceptable' (Sontag 1976: xliii). Just as, according to Sontag and Savarese, Oriental theatre was an instrument for Artaud to beat the stagnant theatre of his time, for Sontag, who, among other roles, was an activist, Artaud might have been a means through which to reprimand her contemporaries' reluctance to engage politically, as well as the tendency to assimilate work that has the potential for resistance into a tame version of 'culture.'

However, Sontag admitted that Artaud, for all his status as a 'classic' remains resistant:

He is an example of a willed classic—an author whom the culture attempts to assimilate but who remains profoundly indigestible. One use of literary respectability in our time—and an important part of the complex career of literary modernism—is to make acceptable an outrageous, essentially forbidding author, who becomes a classic on the basis of the many interesting things to be said about the work that scarcely convey (perhaps even conceal) the real nature of the work itself, which may be, among other things, extremely boring or morally monstrous or terribly painful to read. Certain authors become literary

or intellectual classics because they are *not* read, being in some intrinsic way unreadable (1976: lix).

Considering the mythical status often attributed to Artaud's encounter with Balinese theatre, to what extent might Sontag be right in her suggestion? How was Artaud's work used by theatre practitioners and scholars, in what contexts and for what purposes? Perhaps unsurprisingly, few seemed to have stopped to consider, despite an inevitable degree of Eurocentrism, whether Artaud's singular expertise and insight might have identified something that Balinese actors actually do or try to do.

Grotowski commented that Artaud's writing on Balinese theatre was 'one big misreading' (1968: 121), where 'the unknown is explained by the unknown, the magic by the magic' (1968: 119). Edward Scheer also argued that 'Artaud's secret, above all, is to have made particularly fruitful mistakes and misunderstandings. His description of Balinese theatre, however suggestive it may be for the imagination, is really *one big mis-reading*. Artaud deciphered as "cosmic signs" and "gestures evoking superior powers" elements of the performance which were concrete expressions, specific *theatrical letters in an alphabet of signs* universally understood by the Balinese' (2004: 61; emphases added). The textual metaphors of 'mis-reading,' 'letters' and an 'alphabet of signs' are curious, when Artaud was quite explicitly focusing on viewing and on doing away with textuality. Indeed, one might argue that Artaud was in fact complicating the whole idea of signification, as Deleuze suggested in his notion of 'a language without articulation' (1969: 102). This should, at the very least, cast doubt over Grotowski's remark.

However, and despite Grotowski's qualms about Artaud's understanding of Balinese theatre, elements of Artaud's manifestos can be found in the work of a great many theatre practitioners, including Grotowski himself in his emphasis on the 'holy' actor and the communion between actors and spectators, and Barrault (1910-1994), Brook (1925-), and

Mnouchkine (1939-) in their privileging of theatrical vocabularies over text (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 518).⁵⁸

Considering the quantity of references to Artaud's encounter with Balinese theatre, there is very little understanding of what he saw, or what he said about it. For instance, Artaud noted that the Balinese dancers 'demonstrate victoriously the preponderance of the director, whose creative power *eliminates the words*' (Artaud [1931] 1964: 82).⁵⁹ Artaud's insistence on the importance of the director is suspect if we try to find an equivalent role in Balinese performance (although, having a director is becoming more and more common in large-scale performances in contemporary Bali), and speculation over his reasons for making such a remark considering the state of European theatre at the time is easy. However, this is only the case if one imagines 'the director' as a single author or hero; if, conversely, one considers the director-function, it need not be a person. The 'elimination of words,' on the other hand, suggests a rather radical dislocation of the text from the centre of performance which is still extremely pervasive in Euro-American theorizations of Balinese performance.⁶⁰ As I argue later in this chapter, even when the performance under discussion is clearly not text-based, the performance itself is approached as a text. However, instead of looking further

⁵⁸ However, there might also have been something of a side effect to Artaud's privileging of 'Oriental' theatre: many of his successors created a European theatre that can be deemed Orientalist. For instance, Mnouchkine and Brook have been repeatedly criticized for 'kidnapping' Asian performance modes (Bharucha 1988; Kennedy 2009: 119; Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 552). For a more nuanced evaluation of Mnouchkine's work see Grehan 2009: 123

⁵⁹ See Appendix A, note 4.3.

⁶⁰ Even more generally, studies that approach performance as something that happens in the present of an audience/participant-performer encounter tend to preserve the notion of textuality to some extent. For instance, Albert Lord, one of the first scholars to introduce the idea of orality, still conceived of performances in *The Singer of Tales* as 'oral texts' (2000 [1960]), while Richard Bauman described the text as one of the emergent qualities of performance, together with event structure and social structure (2003 [1975]: 51). More recently, Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* displaced drama, but ultimately preserved the idea of the text in his definition of theatre as 'the collectively spent and used up lifetime in the collectively breathed air of that space in which the performing *and* the spectating take place. The emission and reception of signs and signals take place simultaneously. The theatre performance turns the behaviour onstage and in the auditorium into a *joint text*, a "text" even if there is no spoken dialogue on stage or between actors and audience. Therefore, the adequate description of theatre is bound to the reading of this total text' (2006: 17). 'Text' seems to mean something different in each of these studies; however, the insistence on using the notion of textuality in studies that stress the idea of orality, presence, and impermanence is curious. I shall consider the implications using Laclau's idea of totality in Chapter Six (cross-ref. 187-188).

into his observations and their pertinence to the study of Balinese performance, Artaud in this conversation has become somewhat of a curiosity, not dissimilar, in many cases, to ‘Balinese theatre’ —an iconic but rather empty symbol of cross-cultural artistic fertilization, interculturalism, globalization, or orientalist exploitation, to be retrieved and used in the way that best fits one’s argument.

However, arguably Artaud was not comparing Occidental and Oriental theatre; rather, in Deleuze and Guattari’s reading, he was pointing to *aporia*, to a world of antagonisms and jarring metaphors in the way Foucault ordinarily used them. Artaud’s writings on Balinese theatre, and his emphasis on the importance of gesture and presence as opposed to text, could be taken as an alternative to the textualization, and therefore totalization in Laclau’s terms, of Balinese culture that both colonial and current studies impose on Bali. And might Sontag’s suggestion about the status of ‘unreadable classics’ be relevant here, in this emerging genealogy of theorists and practitioners who have re-inscribed not just Bali but radical thinkers into a familiar linear story that allows little room for critique?

Kimberly Jannarone argued that ‘the traditional reception and interpretation of Artaud’s work appear inadequate’ by way of their not taking into account the ‘political, intellectual, and theatrical climate of its time’ (2012: 2). However, neither has his work been examined in relation to the Balinese practices that incited some of Artaud’s most famous ideas on theatre. Artaud was arguably talking about the absence in Bali of a written text in any sense we might understand and pointed towards the idea of truly dialogic performances, so challenging the idea of textuality upon which, I shall argue, Euro-American scholarship on the subject of Balinese performance still depends to a large extent. Might the overriding need to dismiss Artaud rather than engage critically with what he wrote and its relationship to how Balinese themselves understand their practices stem from the danger he posed to the presuppositions of the theorists and practitioners above?

From Critique to Capitalism

Having considered Artaud's potential for radical reconsideration of European theatre and society, and keeping in mind that arguments subsequent to Artaud's may well start from entirely different presuppositions and develop in starkly different directions, it is possible to ask: how did others engage with Balinese theatre as it was presented in the Paris Colonial Exposition of 1931?⁶¹ Matthew Cohen, in his study *Performing Otherness* (2010), explored the popularization and commercialization of what he termed 'faux'-Balinese and Javanese dances in the aftermath of this encounter, in Europe and later the United States. Several artists, mainly Westerners posing as Asians or claiming some degree of indigeneity that would lend them authenticity or support their claim of being privy to the mysteries of the Orient, capitalized on and made a career out of exploiting the international hype created by the colonial expositions and the excited accounts by the early tourists and expatriates. Most of these artists had only fleeting connections to Balinese performing arts, if any. The most notable ones, for my purposes, were Dutch exotic dancer Mata Hari (1876-1917) who posed as a Javanese, and Javanese actor-dancer Devi Dja (1914-1989). Cohen focused on their individual careers, revealing 'the complex motivations, experiences and approaches undergirding international circulation of imaginings of Java and Bali in the early twentieth century' (2010: 21). But what power relationships was this 'circulation of imaginings of Java and Bali' a part of? Whom and what were they for?

Mata Hari built her lustrous European career on the claim that she possessed a deep knowledge of the 'Hindu mysteries' and its 'ecstatic dances,' although she was not of Javanese descent and had no dance training whatsoever. Mata Hari was accused of espionage and executed during WWI. It is not clear whether any of the accusations were true. However,

⁶¹ The same can be asked about the Colonial Expositions preceding it; two exhibitions had taken place in Paris in 1878 and 1889, and one in Amsterdam in 1883.

her embodiment of Orientalism, was enough: ‘Her accusers [...] prioritized essentialized identity over action, portraying the dancer as “an Asiatic type” or “savage” who deployed feminine charm to obtain classified military information for Germany’ (Cohen 2010: 35). Would it have made a difference, had she been a ‘real’ Javanese dancer? Is identifying a representation of the Orient as ‘faux’ or ‘not-faux’/‘real’ meaningful in the early twentieth-century Euro-American context?

Devi Dja, who was indeed Javanese, ‘studied Balinese dance in Bali for several weeks in 1932 with dancers recently returned from the Colonial Exhibition in Paris’ (Cohen 2010: 183). She then devised traditional-looking dances that were in turn ‘jazzed up’ and made into plays set in Bali and toured with Malay opera company Dardanella with a show billed as ‘Devi Dja’s Bali-Java dancers,’ while ‘[e]arly publicity represented the company as all-Balinese’ (Cohen 2010: 184). However, it has never been clear whether any of the troupe members were actually from Bali, or had serious training in Balinese dance. Bali, it turns out, was already a brand (Hobart 2008). The company toured in Asia, Europe and finally in the United States, from where they could no longer return to their home country because of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies during World War II. How did representations of Balinese dance change during the new economic and political conditions of World War II?

During World War II, Dardanella’s touring came to a halt due to gasoline rationing. The only sustainable option for the company at this point was to market themselves within the trend of Balinese-themed restaurants and clubs, which were already popular throughout the United States since the 1930s. ‘The floorshows at these clubs was the usual mixture of dancers, music, comics and novelty acts; food and drinks reflected American conceptions of Asian and Pacific cuisine; paintings of Balinese dancers and palm trees featured in décor’ (Cohen 2010: 194-95). Bali was once again called to fulfil the Euro-American fantasy of what it ought to be, while ‘Balinese dancers’ were seen as décor. In many ways, Bali is no

more than a placeholder for whatever excited the Western market as early as Krause's photographic record which was followed by a wave of photographers cashing in on Bali's new status as a source of erotica in the twentieth century: 'Once Krause's book circulated, the Germans and the Dutch became romantic voyeurs, and [...] that erotic stance of the gaze' defined, at least in part, their subsequent politics (Atkins 2012: 74). Hansen, Needham and Nichols have already argued that pornography and ethnography are closer than usually assumed, not least because of their shared 'discourse of domination' (1991: 209). What is critical here is Devi Dja's willingness to deliver whatever her international patrons expected her to at any given moment. However, once the notion of domination enters the discussion, willingness may not be the correct word. To what extent can this be reframed in terms of coercion or co-option? And to what extent did other Indonesians (and do they still) share this 'willingness'?

As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, Hobart argued that colonialism and tourism helped to shape Balinese dance by ridding theatre of the features that would be incomprehensible to foreigners: 'European colonialists and tourists,' he wrote, 'expected the natives to dance. And the Balinese obliged their conquerors brilliantly' (Hobart 2007: 109). And sometimes, they did so by inventing new genres, such as *kebyar*—what could be seen, to some extent, as 'a complex act [of] cultural translation' (Hobart 2007: 115). As Balinese society became increasingly oriented around tourism, what role have outsiders played in the development of theatre and dance? What relationship do such consumer capitalist representations bear on Balinese practices and understandings of themselves in practice? And how have Balinese implicated themselves into such industries? These questions will be addressed in the following chapters. But the issue of who gets to represent Bali and Balinese performance needs to be explored first. In the case of faux-Balinese dance, for instance, it seems that the people who take it upon themselves to represent Bali need not necessarily have

any substantial relation to the island or its people. ‘Balinese,’ then, turns out to be a very loose category; almost as much so as gender which, in Butler’s sense (1988, 1990), is not a substance but the appearance of substance achieved through performative repetition. How did the power configuration involved in these performances change after World War II?

Devi Dja landed a minor, uncredited role in the Hollywood hit *Road to Bali* (1952) (Cohen 2010: 198), for which she is, however, most widely known. In *Road to Bali*, Bali may be seen as simply one name for exotica in service of the romantic plot, a tropical paradise largely interchangeable with any other foreign, tropical place. The producer, however, offered a different explanation: ‘They’re always “On the Road” to Bali, but Bali itself won’t be shown. [...] The reason is that our political relations with Indonesia are too touchy. We don’t want the picture to do anything that make them worse. Likewise, the villain [...] will be a native of unidentified nationality. Censorship has gotten to the point where the only villain you can identify on the screen is an American’ (Thomas 1952: no pagination). There seems to be, then, a complex relationship between representations and artistic attitudes towards the Orient and changing political and economic conditions. With the end of colonialism and the United States’ emergence as a major power after World War II, there was a broad American framework that was widely invoked both to talk about dance or theatre and which was often used by Balinese themselves. The end of colonialism gave rise to new ways of conceiving the relationship between the West and the Rest, including as one of development (Inden 2012: 2). How might the changing representations of Bali and Balinese theatre be related to these processes?

Bali as an Instantiation of Universality

Bali might have loomed large in European imagination in the period before World War II. However, as I argued in the previous section, then came the rupture of the end of Dutch

colonialism, Indonesian Independence, and the emergence of a new world order. What happened subsequently to representations of Bali and Balinese theatre, and how did these relate to this new framework?

Before Geertz formulated his thesis on the ‘theatre-state’ (1980a), Victor Turner had developed the notion of social drama, a theatrical approach to social processes, when studying the Ndembu of Zambia for his doctoral research (completed in 1955). He then broadened the idea into a dramaturgical framework for the analysis of virtually any society, effectively applying the particular universally.⁶² However, the drama analogy for social life was not without its critics. Turner remarked:

I have had to defend myself against such trenchant critics as my former teachers Sir Raymond Firth and the late Max Gluckman, who have accused me of unwarrantably introducing a model drawn from literature (they did not say *Western* literature, but clearly they had the Aristotelian model of tragedy in mind) to throw light on spontaneous social processes, which are not authored or set in conventions, but arise from clashes of interest or incompatible social structural principles in the give and take of everyday life in a social group (1982: 106).

However, this critique was premised on the perceived incompatibility of literature with social anthropology, rather than the textualization of performance or the applicability of either Western dramaturgical models on the Ndembu, or of the universal applicability of the model developed in the context of antagonisms of Ndembu social life everywhere else.

Turner was indeed cautious about his usage of ‘texts’ (or textualized social processes) and tried to locate them ‘in *context of performance*, rather than to construe them into abstract, dominantly cognitive systems’ (1982: 107). Turner’s endeavours become relevant to the study of Bali through its links with the new field of Performance Studies (cross-ref. 10), which was being developed at the time by Schechner. What was the status of recorded and

⁶² Turner 1980, from a Planning Meeting for the World Conference on Ritual and Performance, quoted in Schechner and Appel 1990: 1. The details of Turner’s argument as they pertain to the study of Bali are further explored in Chapter Six (cross-ref. 181-185).

mass mediated performance? How Schechner accounted for the mediation of performance and culture is worth noting.

Turner and Schechner met at a conference on ‘Ritual, Drama, and Spectacle,’ organized by Turner in 1977. The conference was so successful that they joined to plan a ‘World Conference on Ritual and Performance,’ which developed into three related conferences held during 1981-82, the third of which, held in New York, attracted artists and scholars from the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Together with Schechner, Turner initiated the quest for ‘the universals of performance’ (Schechner and Appel 1990), that is dramatic models that work universally and interculturally (Schechner 1988: 291). What is the relationship between this model and the new, primarily American-led, framework I described in the previous section? To what extent was interculturalism part of the new relationship between the West and the Rest,⁶³ one that reimagined others no longer as radically different but in essence the same, despite apparent, ‘epidermal’ differences (see Barba 1996: 218; cross-ref. 141)? And how is this complex relationship examined in studies of intercultural performance?

Schechner set out to establish Performance Studies as a separate discipline and opened the way for approaches to performance that would have been impossible, unthinkable even, had theatre continued to be studied solely within the confines of literature. However, Schechner himself recognized some of the problems in his approach: ‘[S]ome very sinister forces are present in interculturalism. First off, it is people from the economically advantaged places that are able to travel and import. Areas are culturally advantaged because of extensive and long-term exploitation of other areas’ (1982: 4). However, he concluded that

[t]he more contact among peoples the better. The more we, and everyone else too, can perform our own and other peoples’ cultures the better. To perform someone else’s culture [...] takes a knowledge, a ‘translation,’ that is different, more viscerally experiential, than

⁶³ It was also during that time that Geertz embraced the ‘drama analogy for social life’ (1980b: 172) and applied it to nineteenth-century Bali, but, unlike Turner and Schechner, he divorced it completely from performing arts. In its most pervasive contemporary form, the theatre metaphor originated in Africa—the ghost of the Ndembu is still hovering over the island.

translating a book. Most essentially, intercultural exchange takes a teacher: someone who knows the body of performance of the culture being translated. The translator of culture is not a mere agent, as a translator of words might be, but an actual culture-bearer. This is why performing other cultures becomes so important. Not just reading them, not just visiting them, or importing them—but actually doing them. So that ‘them’ and ‘us’ is elided, or laid experientially side-by-side (Schechner 1982: 4).

Schechner here presented a reified or substantialized account of culture, which he represented as systematic, coherent, knowable, purveyable, and indeed commoditized so that it can be imported. How would Schechner’s argument about translation be transformed if we took into account the conception drawn from Cultural Studies of culture as a site, or moments, of struggle? What are the power relations involved in these acts of ‘intercultural’ communication as the principle of modernization and world-ordering ‘in a world without empires’ (Inden 2012: 3), post World War II? ‘Communication,’ in this context, meant ‘communication at a distance, an idea that embraced a range of different but connected activities—overseas educational projects, propaganda through the mass media, and the widespread spectacular representation of certain events as historic’ (Inden 2012: 4). So perhaps Schechner’s suggestion of eliding ‘them’ and ‘us’ or laying them side-by-side in this lopsided power relationship is not entirely straightforward. ‘Inter-’ implies some equality between parties. What is missing from this account, however, is any hint that this communication ‘was to be supported by administrative regulation and “control,” and, where necessary, military intervention’ (Inden 2012: 4). Saying that a ‘translator of culture is not a mere agent’⁶⁴ (Schechner 1982: 4) is misleading, on the one hand because translation here means articulating other people and their practices for them, and on the other because it assumes transparency in the mediation of experience.

⁶⁴ This is also a very odd use of ‘agent,’ which seems to be closer to the notion of instrument and to misrepresent the amount of control, or even power, that being an agent involves by most definitions (see Wilson and Shpall 2012).

So what is the status of the people with whom Schechner gets to collaborate in his intercultural exchanges? On what occasions, under what circumstances, with what purposes and what outcomes?

Rustom Bharucha has voiced an oft-cited criticism in this regard:

Let me state quite candidly that interculturalism for me is not merely a subject or discipline that demands to be studied on a purely theoretical level. Essentially—and there is no other way that I can state my position—it has to be confronted within the particularities of a specific historical condition. As an Indian who grew up in post-Independence India, exposed as I was to the remnants and contradictions of colonialism, inspired by and yet resistant to my predominantly Western education, I can perceive the complexities of interculturalism only from within my own historical space. Likewise, I believe that Schechner's perspective on interculturalism has been unavoidably shaped by his own cultural background and profession in the American theatre. Our investment in the subject is inevitably different. It is naive to assume that interculturalism is an overriding global phenomenon that transcends the difference of class, race, and history. [...] Schechner cannot sufficiently focus on historical contexts because he examines too many disparate cultures at the same time (1984b: 255).

However, even in his drawing attention to the critical questions of class, race, and history, Bharucha arguably trivialized his position by maintaining an equally questionable notion of culture as Schechner's in his reference to 'disparate cultures,' as if the problem in Schechner's approach were primarily a matter of dispersion of attention. But a radical reconsideration of the idea of 'culture' was not central to the discussion.

In his response to Bharucha, Schechner pointed out that his search for 'universal patterns of behavior' does not equal disbelief

in the minute particulars of each and every culture. My reason for studying Indian, Japanese, Southeast Asian, native American, and Euro-American performance has been to locate the particulars of each and see where they overlap, where there are mutual influences, and where they diverge. The flavor of each is what interests me. More than that—what makes 'live performance' so extraordinary is that each run-through is unique. [...] A 'performance score' or 'performance text' is the code of a given performance (1984: 248).

Schechner's model is problematic on a variety of scores, as it takes for granted a series of unexamined but problematic terms: culture, code, influence, text, performance. First, it rests on an essentialist notion of culture, while the idea of 'influence' is vague, implying that there is some relationship between cultures, but without ever explaining what or of what kind. Second, performance has such a variety of meanings in English that much of its theorization consists on slippage between different usages (cross-ref. 18). Finally, the issue of textuality is crucial. I shall return to this subject in Chapter Six, but some preliminary remarks may prove useful: What does Schechner mean by text, and what does treating performance as a text involve? Textualizing is a form of totalizing, because a text is conceivable as a totality, a positive essence. This is significant, because it is precisely what Laclau termed 'the ideological': 'The ideological would not consist of the misrecognition of a positive essence, but exactly the opposite: it would consist of the non-recognition of the precarious character of any positivity, of the impossibility of any ultimate suture' (Laclau 1990: 92). In other words, claiming that performance can be viewed as a text, i.e. a totality, is itself an assertion of power, secured by the simultaneous assertion that this text is not readily available to everyone, but a secret, a 'code' (in a formulation that seems curiously similar to the transmission model of media communication described earlier; cross-ref. 38).

Despite its problems, Schechner's approach created the basis for the vast majority of subsequent studies of Balinese theatre which I shall examine in this chapter. However, there is a related but somewhat different approach to the quest for the universals of performance that was developed in parallel with Schechner's by Barba (1936-), an Italian director who founded the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) for the study of 'Eurasian' theatre, particularly its bodily techniques and performer training, in 1979.

Barba trained under Grotowski, and first met Schechner in 1963 in his effort to publicize Grotowski's work in the United States, where Schechner was already holding a

teaching position at Tulane University (and later at New York University) and was the editor of the prestigious *Tulane Drama Review/The Drama Review*. Unlike Turner and Schechner, however, Barba's peculiar concept of anthropology focused on biology and physiology with total disregard for the cultural and social contexts of the forms he studies. So, in effect, Barba bypassed the problem of cultural difference by subsuming it under the universals of human biology. So culture, and with it Cultural Studies, can simply be ignored. What is the significance of favouring the physiological as opposed to the cultural, however understood?

By Eurasian theatre Barba did not mean the 'synthesis of Europe and Asia'; instead, for Barba, it 'designated the commonalities in their "pre-expressive" principles, their "common pre-cultural foundation"' (1996: 218). The particularities (conventions, styles, techniques) of different theatres were considered as 'epidermises.' Barba aimed to find what lies beneath them, 'the organs which keep them alive' (1996: 218).⁶⁵ He was searching for the universal essence of theatre. However, Barba admitted that 'he has never been interested in trying to "fully understand" either the "meaning" or the "execution" of the Asian performers with whom he works as they are understood by the native performer' (Zarrilli and Barba 1988: 102). Instead, Barba's conclusions about universal pre-expressivity were based on his own empirical perception⁶⁶ 'of whatever the Asian performers *were asked to do*' (Zarrilli and Barba 1988: 102; emphasis added).

Even scholars who are generally well-disposed towards Barba's methods have questioned the legitimacy of this approach. De Marinis, a regular collaborator of ISTA, remarked on Barba's workshops with Asian performers from Bali and Japan:

⁶⁵ There is an intriguing contrast here between Barba's use of organs as an antithesis to 'epidermises' and Deleuze's idea of the Body Without Organs as introduced by Artaud (Deleuze 2004 [1969]: 95-107; Artaud 1947). In 'The Schizophrenic and the Little Girl,' Deleuze contrasted two distinct ways of encountering the world: on the one hand there is the world of surfaces, similar to Barba's 'epidermises,' and on the other a world of depth, where 'bodies have no surface' (Deleuze 2004 [1969]: 99). However, in contrast to Barba, the rejection of surface leads to a world of bodies without organs. Rather than seeking to uncover a reality of functioning parts, Artaud's rejection of surface leads to a radically different understanding of the world, one of 'language without articulation' (Deleuze 2004 [1969]: 101-102; cross-ref. 126).

⁶⁶ This is a peculiar use of 'empiricism' that I examine further in Chapter Six (cross-ref. 183-184).

I get the impression of being in a situation that is constantly on the verge of turning from an experimentally correct study of the pre-expressive into a very different and less correct [...] situation, as when performers having different traditions and conventions consciously adopt the principles suggested by Barba to modulate, break down or modify their actions on stage. In short, the danger lies in the attempt to demonstrate the general (transcultural) existence of principles of the pre-expressive through the construction of *ad hoc* situations (1995: 127).

There is, then, not only a sustained attempt to extract art and its discussion from the political, economic and social contexts of its use, but a power dynamic all too reminiscent of the colonial modes of engagement in which the natives were expected to dance. What is described in De Marinis' quote above in effect goes back to Barthes and bourgeois myth: it is a sustained ex-nomination, a ruling class concealing the fact that it is talking on behalf of another 'and thereby produces myth' (Barthes 2000 [1957]: 146). Here, domination gives way to hegemony, as a European institution is articulating the Orient on its own terms even after the end of colonialism, in a re-inscription of power that parallels and rivals previous political and economic configurations.

In what ways might Barba's construction of '*ad hoc* situations' have shaped Balinese theatre? This may be exemplified by one of his own theatre productions, *Ur-Hamlet* (2006), in collaboration with the Gambuh Désa Batuan Ensemble (Batuan, Bali).⁶⁷ *Ur-Hamlet*, its title summarizing the quest for universal origins and the romantic need to preserve the loss of that which is perceived as 'Ur,' featured a multinational cast, including the Odin Teatret (Barba's company) performers, a 'chorus' of foreigners from around the world, and approximately thirty Balinese performers and musicians from the Ensemble. It combined Balinese *Gambuh*, Japanese *Noh*, Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, Chinese *Nanguan* opera, and Afro-Brazilian *Candomblé*. In many ways, this describes what Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline

⁶⁷ The Gambuh Desa Batuan Ensemble was founded in 1993 by the Italian dancer Cristina Wistari Formaggia, with the ostensible aim to 'preserve and transmit the practice of this dance drama [Gambuh] among the younger generation.' The group is a permanent part of Theatrum Mundi, the intercultural ensemble of ISTA (see Odin Teatret 2014).

Lo termed ‘thin’ cultural cosmopolitanism: a simplistic medley of cultural fusion ‘with the added patina of international sophistication’ (2007: 8), ‘which lacks due consideration of either the hierarchies of power subtending cross-cultural engagement or the economic and material conditions that enable it’ (2007: 9). Tellingly, the Ensemble was created in 1993 in Batuan by Cristina Wistari Formaggia, an ISTA collaborator, and was initially supported by the Ford Foundation (whose objectives nicely summarize the seamless union of capitalism and cultural hegemony).

The rationale behind the founding of the Ensemble was that Gambuh was under threat of extinction and in need of preservation. But what are the conditions of knowledge and power that enable such a constructed creation to be presented as evidence of preservation? There is a curious act of power involved in this endeavour, reminiscent of Dutch efforts to preserve ‘Balinese culture’ (cross-ref. 85-91), with the corresponding assumptions about the essence of the thing to be preserved and the accompanying inherent power inequality involved in this relationship that invariably favours the foreigners at the expense of the dancing natives. What is involved in presenting this as collaboration? Subsequently, what is the outcome of reducing other people’s practices to anthologies of techniques (as in Barba’s *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*, 1991; cross-ref. 183-184), always made to fit the Western schema of what theatre universally is? How does this bear on recent studies of Bali in particular?

From the universal to the particularity of artistic experience

The pervasiveness of Barba’s methods and objectives becomes evident when we consider the number and popularity of studies of Asian performance, and of Balinese theatre in particular, that have emulated them, as well as the fact that the vast majority of the younger generation of Balinese theatre scholars have collaborated with ISTA at one point or another.

Ron Jenkins, a theatre scholar (Wesleyan), director, and performer, has written about comic traditions around the world, including Bali (1994). Jenkins often worked with Balinese troupes involved in ISTA's activities, on which he remarked: 'The ancient Greeks, performing in the temple of Dionysus, most certainly choreographed the choruses of Aeschylus and Euripides with dancing hieroglyphs charged with spirituality echoed by today's Balinese temple dancers' (Catra and Jenkins 2002: 65). While what Catra and Jenkins meant by 'spirituality' remained obscure and unquestioned, Artaud's jarring metaphor ('animated hieroglyphs') has now evidently been instantiated as an unproblematic ahistorical and transcultural truth, in defiance of the evidence. Classical Greek tragedy was not performed in temples. It was also a highly political matter,⁶⁸ which the authors disregarded on both accounts, as if theatre in Bali were not political. It is unimportant that there was very little in common between Greece of that period and the highly commoditized culture of twenty-first century Bali in which, despite their denials, Balinese have reworked and mass mediated their practices as Hindu, traditional, 'spiritual' and so on, according to changing and often contradictory political and economic needs. As Hobsbawm remarked, "[t]raditions" which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 1).

This extrapolation of an invented tradition, an essential and uncontested theatrical culture from the economic, political and social circumstances of its production, evaluation, challenge and use is evident in different ways in the work of two other North American scholars of Balinese performance. Emigh's *Masked Performance* (1996) researched theatrical forms and techniques from South and South East Asia, with a large part of the book being devoted to Bali, and *Topèng* in particular. Emigh's stated intent was 'to point out how patterns underlying often elegantly structured and *socially effective* adult performances can

⁶⁸ See Zeitlin and Winkler's *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* (1990) and Meier's *The Political Art of Greek Tragedy* (1993).

derive their form and appeal from what seem to be universal childhood strategies for survival and growth. Ultimately, the hope is to *cast a light*, however faint, on the genesis and ontology of performance as a human phenomenon' (1996: 3; emphases added). The goal was dual: on the one hand, to gain 'a clearer understanding about theatre itself as an artistic and social phenomenon' (Emigh 1996: xx), and on the other 'to know what *topeng* has to teach me as a Western performer, teacher and scholar and what I am positioned (and not positioned) to learn' (Emigh 1996: 171). Here a particular historical and cultural idea of what it is to be human—quite apart from 'theatre' and 'artistic'—is quietly smuggled in as an unproblematic universal. The question is how far the writer's reflexive stance on the limits of the encounter is carried through with all its awkward implications, or whether it is what Barthes called 'inoculation' (2000 [1957]: 150-151), by which an apparent recognition of the difficulties of cultural translation is easily finessed through the image of teaching or learning, which of course presupposes a universal notion of the actor. At the same time, one can note here the recurrence of a familiar theme, namely that Bali is there to be plundered by (mostly white) others in the furtherance of their private agendas.

This becomes even clearer when Emigh considers the implications of the idea of 'theatre itself,' of universality, or of an analysis of 'Rangda [cross-ref. 23] and her many cousins around the world' (1996: 72). What is implied by the kinship idiom of 'cousins'? In Emigh's discussion of Western theatre's 'progressive shedding of masks as the civilization moved more and more towards an ethos centered around the individual' (1996: 21) and the reference to 'shamanistic traditions' as 'the seedbed for theatre' (1996: 31) can be seen a romantic nostalgia for the 'origins' of theatre and the belief that the studied peoples' theatre is closer to that common originary moment. This is an articulation that uses a teleological narrative designed to place the—equally imaginary as a unified object—Western theatre, for all its lacks, at the civilized, progressive and inevitable end of the timeline. In addition, there

is a functionalist understanding of performance, which is analyzed and evaluated in terms of ‘effectiveness’ (Emigh 1996: 3, 7, 13, 57, 66, 222, 288).

The emphasis on effectiveness echoes Schechner and his ‘efficacy-entertainment braid’ (1988: 112-169), by which performance is placed on a continuum between ritual and theatre, the former being associated with efficacy, the latter with entertainment, in varying degrees (2006: 79-80). But how is this effectiveness to be measured? For whom, on whom, and on whose authority is the performance supposed to be effective? The other term of this antithesis is equally revealing, in that the idea of entertainment, which Richard Dyer argued is culturally specific and historically situated in a European context (1992), needs to be flattened out, as do theatre, art, culture, to make them the negotiable currency of contemporary scholarship.

A large part of Emigh’s analysis focused on a *Topèng* by I Nyoman Kakul, performed in Tusan in 1975. The performance was explained as a necessity in order to fulfil the ritual goals of the village:

Kakul can only take on the role of priestly mediator because of his skills as a dancer and storyteller. A priest cannot perform the Sidha Karya^[69] ceremony himself and Kakul would not perform it without previously doing the rest of the performance. We are left with a bewildering and intriguing paradox: the village of Tusan, with a large Brahmana population, must bring in an outside performer, a Sudra [a low-caste person], in order to complete successfully a ceremony attending the cremation of a high priest. Within the context of performance, Kakul becomes what he plays. For a time, within the mask of Sidha Karya that he is privileged to wear, he functionally *is* the ‘priest of dharma’ — emissary from the gods and intercessor for mankind (Emigh 1996: 151).

This rests on the substantialization of caste as some rigid hierarchy that works unproblematically and without variation in every context. Was that ever the case in Bali?

⁶⁹ *Sidha Karya* or *Sidhakarya*, literally ‘he who finishes the work,’ is the last mask donned by a *Topèng Pajegan* performer. For more information about *Topèng Pajegan* cross-ref. 214.

Caste in Bali is a contentious issue (see Lekkerkerker 1926; Korn 1932; Duff-Cooper 1985). In what sense—or rather when—Balinese have caste depends on which definition one takes of caste. In addition, caste is closely linked to power, so any conclusions drawn from its ethnographic study must be necessarily situated in context, both in time and in location. So Emigh’s argument conveniently omits the extent to which caste is a complex principle of the division of labour and so mutual dependence. What purpose do enunciations of caste such as this by scholars like Emigh serve? In addition, this ‘bewildering and intriguing paradox’ cannot even start to be approached in terms of the power relations involved, the particularities of Tusan or the historical and political circumstances under which the performance took place, because the analytical models used do not permit it. Emigh argued that ‘Kakul’s performance [...] asserts that both the macrocosmos (*buwana agung*) and the microcosmos (*buwana alit*) made in its image “find expression in the body of every man”’ (1996: 201). However, without any reference to the history of these terms or to the practices that involve them in contemporary Bali, this kind of analysis transforms the studied peoples into media for timeless, ahistorical, apolitical abstract mechanisms of social functions.

Emigh attributed *Topèng*’s appeal to Western theatre practitioners to its ‘immediacy of impact, range of signification, and purposiveness within social mechanisms that are missing in most of the theatre available to us; yet it is not so alien as to be beyond our ken or to lack appeal as a theatrical model’ (Emigh 1996: 192). Bali once again provides ‘us’ with a sense of unity and cohesiveness that we lack, while the possibilities of engagement by Balinese with their own practices are greatly limited to what the model allows. There seems to be a parallel here between this process and Jaap van Ginneken’s comment about news being Western news: ‘poorer clients from the Second and Third Worlds are obviously of marginal concern, particularly if their sensibilities clash head-on with those of clients from the First World. In these cases, their concerns will often be all but ignored. As the age-old saying

goes: “Who pays the piper calls the tune” (1998: 44). In other words, the articulation of what happens is skewed towards what makes sense to the people carrying out the investigation, the standards, language, and code of which are conveniently those of the analyst.

There is, then, a number of theatre scholars who have taken special interest in Balinese performance, for various reasons. While these scholars claim to understand what motivates Balinese theatre and dance, the frameworks on which they draw are for the most part Euro-American and appear to pay scant attention to how Balinese set about creating, evaluating and understanding their own performances. So the question arises as what role, if any, Balinese ideas and practices play in these representations of Balinese theatre. In addition, who have these scholars been talking to in their research? To what extent are their findings based on Balinese accounts of the practices in which they are involved? What do Balinese tell them, and in what capacity are they speaking (or spoken for)? How do they communicate, in what circumstances, and, considering that some of the practitioner-scholars discussed here speak little or no Indonesian, let alone Balinese, in which language?

Coldiron’s *Trance and Transformation of the Actor in Japanese Noh and Balinese Masked Dance-Drama* (2004) claimed to explore ‘the responses of those who use masks, rather than the effect of masks upon observers (audience), [and...] to shift the focus of performance studies research to centre on the *experience of the performer*, rather than on the perception of the audience’ (2004: 319; emphasis added). But what does the idea of knowing someone else’s experience involve? Accessing the experience of the performer is a multiple impossibility, as accessing someone else’s experience presupposes its transparent mediation; but even if such mediation were possible, for example verbally, the history of hermeneutics has shown the possibility of knowing what someone means by what they say to be problematic in the least (Ramberg and Gjesdal 2013).

Coldiron criticized Schechner's 'efficacy-entertainment braid' (Coldiron 2004: 31-35) and argued that in her study 'the experience of the masked performer will be examined within the specific cultural milieu of each genre, rather than as an illustration of a larger theoretical construct. However, it shall become apparent that culturally specific aspects of performance practice may have neurophysiological implications for masked performance across a range of cultures' (2004: 35). Coldiron, then, sought universals from a different angle. 'All of the masks I shall compare here have ritual functions or spiritual resonances within their own cultures that impart to them an aura of mysterious other-worldliness that is apparent even to the uninitiated. It is evident that their evocative power can transcend culture to touch chords deep within the human psyche' (2005: 227-228). Quite apart from the assumption that the 'other-worldly' is the same across cultures, the 'human psyche' is a rather mystical notion that presupposes a universal human nature, which almost invariably happens to be what suits the expository needs of the author. Ritual and the spiritual are taken as equally unproblematic universals, while that the 'evocative power' of masks can 'touch chords deep within the human psyche' is not falsifiable, and therefore not confirmable either, and in any case definitely not evident. Indeed, Coldiron suggested that "'universal" types are expressed in masks of Bali and Japan' (2005: 228). However, she admitted that 'a definitive explanation for these similarities has not yet emerged. Nonetheless, although documentary historical evidence is scant, the tantalizing possibility of correlations between these masks is affirmed by anecdotal, iconographic, and even choreographic evidence' (Coldiron 2005: 227). In addition, '[w]hatever information exists concerning the sources of these masks is lost in the murky world of myth and legend, and the task of finding historical or archaeological evidence is further complicated by the ephemeral nature of the materials from which the masks are made, the paucity of documentary records concerning ritual and theatrical performance, and conflicting local traditions' (Coldiron 2005: 228). Note the appeal, familiar

to such argument, to murky lost ‘origins,’ which seems to be a recycled bourgeois myth at least as old as the early colonial representations I explored in the first part of this chapter (cross-ref. 141, 144). And, if local traditions conflict, it is not quite clear how we could possibly extract some unambiguous narrative.

So, as there is no evidence of a connection between certain masks in Japan and certain masks in Bali which, according to the author, present certain similarities, why must a connection be found, apart from the fact that such a possibility seems ‘tantalizing’? ‘Universals’ seem to be little more than a solution to an arbitrarily chosen comparison that would otherwise be defeated by difficult-to-approach ‘conflicting local traditions.’ Is the psychic unity of mankind really the result of such comparisons, or is it the premise which makes them possible—variation, or ‘flavor’ in Schechner’s terms (1984: 248), being premised on similarity?

Kathy Foley noted that Coldiron ‘is very good at pulling together what is available in English, and the bibliography is an excellent starting place for Westerners approaching any of these arts. Sources in Japanese and Balinese however, are missing’ (2005: 363). Coldiron’s informants consisted mainly of the ‘new generation of Balinese performers such as I Made Bandem, I Wayan Dibia, I Nyoman Catra, and others who combine traditional Balinese training with understanding of Western academic traditions’ (Foley 2005: 363) and, who, I would note, are all well versed in explaining Balinese theatre to outsiders (foreign scholars, practitioners, and cultural tourists) in English. They are, in other words, articulators, in the Cultural Studies sense of the word, i.e. both ‘speaking’ and ‘linking’ disparate elements into a seemingly unitary whole. Reframing discourse as the product of articulatory practice, however, poses questions of power and brings to the fore mediation as a complex and indeterminate process that involves various media, from academic and popular writing, to television appearances, official speeches (cross-ref. 260-263) and so forth. Conveniently, the

articulators' fluency also saves such foreign scholars from having to worry about cultural translation (or indeed the need to learn the Balinese language), which is guaranteed by the authenticity of the well-informed informant (cross-ref. 76), and enables them to concentrate on the unmediated 'experience.' To what extent is the idea of knowing someone else's experience a fantasy of consumer capitalism that rests on rendering experience as a commodity that can be shared, appropriated, and transacted?

That these Coldiron's informants have an 'understanding of Western academic traditions' may actually be an understatement; Bandem and Catra hold PhDs from Wesleyan University, and Dibia from UCLA. However, we rarely get to hear directly from them in the analytical parts of the book, and when we do, it never becomes clear which, whose, and what kind of language they are speaking. The question of language is crucial, because, if the informants were speaking in English, they were already articulating their accounts in someone else's terms and someone else's metaphysics, without the researcher having first considered the degree to which these are commensurate (or even commensurable) with Balinese practices and terms. In addition, Coldiron remarked: 'It is interesting to note that the language of Western mask practitioners regarding the use of the mask is often highly mystical, in spite of the practical, thoroughly secular use to which the masks are put. In contrast, the practitioners of Noh and Balinese masked drama, in spite of the often intensely spiritual nature of their work, tend to discuss working with masks in purely technical, even mundanely practical terms' (2004: 18). So where do the questions about 'universals' and 'the actor's consciousness' (Coldiron 2004: 35) come from? What do the notions of 'consciousness', 'self' or even 'mystical' mean? Are there equivalent terms in Balinese, and how are they used and understood?⁷⁰

⁷⁰ This is not to say that one cannot have feelings or experiences for which there are no terms. However, it would be very difficult for someone to elaborate on the cultural significance of something in the absence of a corresponding vocabulary. Interestingly, when Balinese talk of 'mystical,' they tend to use the Indonesian

Coldiron argued that

the masked actor in Balinese dance-drama and Japanese Noh theatre performs in an altered state of consciousness. [...] Thus, masked performance requires a particular sort of ‘subjective objectivity’ in which the actor must not only embody a character, but must do so by subjecting him or herself to the mask, a character whose expression has already been determined. Masked actors must inhabit, rather than interpret, and must bend themselves to the mask’s character, rather than revealing themselves through their rendition of a role. To don a mask is, in some ways, to lose one’s self (2004: 19).

On the one hand, the notion of ‘altered states of consciousness’ only makes sense by contrast to an assumed ‘normal’ state of consciousness which remains undefined. On the other, the process described above is only peculiar if one views the ‘self’ as a static and definite entity rather than a fluid series of changing positionalities, as for instance would Foucault (1988). Given that this study claims to take into account the experiences of actors, it would not be unreasonable to ask how Coldiron’s Balinese interlocutors conceptualized such matters.

Coldiron did begin by asking: ‘In what way does the mask influence the masked performer? Getting an answer to this question is, unfortunately, exceedingly difficult because the special and particular relationship between actor and character, though the very basis of theatre, is rarely articulated’ (2004: 17). But what does the question mean? What is the significance of influence? The vagueness of the question may account for some of the difficulties in getting an answer. In addition, the experiences of Balinese performers with regard to the issues of ‘consciousness’ and ‘self’ were marginal at best, while she drew from the work of Eugene d’ Aquili and Charles Laughlin, who ‘argue that myth and ritual (and by association the mask) are a neurobiological necessity’ (Foley 2005: 364) and cited widely from de Zoete and Spies, to Belo (1960) and Suryani and Jensen (1993) on trance and possession, despite the fact that ‘the term “trance” is not embraced by the Asian performers of *topeng* or *no* but used only for forms such as *calonarang*. *No* and *topeng* dancers may

mistik, which comes from the Dutch. So Balinese have learned to represent themselves in European terms so that Europeans can find in Bali what they went to Bali in search of.

grant that the history may be intertwined with mediumship, but do not apply this term to current practice' (Foley 2005: 364). In addition, there are several Balinese terms (*karawuhan*, *kalinggihan*, *kapangluh*, *karangsukan*, and also the Indonesian *kesurupan*) all of which can be glossed in English as 'trance,' but which have very different connotations and implications in practice. It is unclear to which one Coldiron was referring.

Finally, presumably in an attempt to overcome the problems of accessing someone else's experience as explained earlier, Coldiron used her 'own experience as a performer of Balinese Topeng as a "case study" to illustrate the unfolding of the transformation process and the nature of the altered state of consciousness that is evoked' (Coldiron 2004: 288). She concluded that '[a]s a practitioner myself, I can attest that it is an experience utterly distinct from unmasked performance. Can these findings be applied to the experiences of mask performers in the West?' (Coldiron 2004: 320). What is implied by the final question? How did Coldiron position herself in relation to her research? And, considering the kinds of sources of information, who and what was this study for?

To draw together the various lines taken by the theatre scholars of this section, I would argue that, from Jenkins' comparison of invented traditions, to Emigh's insistence on *Topèng*'s uniqueness precisely because of the way it inflects universals of what it is to be human, to Coldiron's claim of being able to access the performer's inner experience, there seems to be an increasing confusion between the universal and the particular. These, in addition, take place within consistently unexamined power relationships between the knower and the known, which have now extended to a generation of American-educated Balinese scholars and practitioners who are only too eager to explain their 'culture' (for which they use the neologism '*budaya*'; cross-ref. 196) in foreign terms (for various reasons that I shall explore in the next chapter), while considering the implicit definition of culture as a transactable commodity, which is very far from the idea of culture as sites or moments of

struggle. The latter would require the analyst to enquire not only into what is going on, but also into the participants' understandings. Perhaps the singular form of writing about Balinese theatre since World War II that I explored in this chapter could be seen as a fitting illustration of Deleuze's criterion of capitalism as ever-expanding transactability (Deleuze and Guattari 1972, 1987).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated the changing role of Balinese theatre in Western accounts of Bali, and considered what Balinese performance and culture were *for* on various accounts. This examination resulted in the emergence of four main strands in the representation of Bali: from the colonial imagining of a generic and muddled Orient; to an antithesis to, or a rod with which to beat, European theatre; to an instantiation of, or a test case for, the universals that were part of new ways of imagining the relationship between Europe, the US, and the rest of the world; and finally to the reverse movement from the universal to the particular that becomes universal through its dissolution into transferrable and transactable capital.

Where does this leave the study of Balinese theatre, considering that the most prominent scholars and practitioners in Bali today have collaborated with one of the Western scholars mentioned here and/or have been educated in the United States? To what extent have Balinese been trained to explain themselves in terms of various outsiders' knowledge about them, and how is this transforming Balinese ideas about knowledge, understanding, and explanation? How have Balinese and other Indonesians represented Balinese theatre and dance, under what circumstances, with what outcomes, and what is the relationship between these and foreigners' accounts? In the following chapter, I consider as what, under what conditions, in what circumstances, and for what purposes Balinese and other Indonesians

have been representing Balinese performance, and the dialogue of which such representations were a part.

Chapter Five: The Task of Representing Theatre: Indonesian and Balinese Scholars

In the previous chapter, I investigated the changing role of Balinese theatre and dance in accounts of Bali by American and European academics and practitioners. In this chapter, I shall consider how Balinese and Indonesians, taken as contrasting but also overlapping categories, have framed their accounts of theatre and dance, and to what extent this has been reactive to the changing political and social conditions of knowledge from the early twentieth century to today. The question of what this knowledge is for becomes even more pertinent if we contrast European ideas of knowledge with Balinese epistemological approaches.

Balinese attitudes towards knowledge seem particularly compatible with Johannes Fabian's distinction between knowledge, a fixation of process into order, as opposed to the activity of knowing (1991: 191). Balinese tend to emphasize practices of knowing, therefore recognizing that these are necessarily context-specific, rather than abstract and totalizing ideas of knowledge.⁷¹ Hobart has argued that knowing, in its Balinese sense, is a social practice in that it entails socially-situated action by closely referencing specific Balinese speech practices; for instance, in Balinese, knowing, thinking, and remembering are spoken of as *laksana* (action) (Hobart 2000: 143). What is, then, involved in forcing a fixed and abstract idea of knowledge on Balinese, and what are the implications of doing so in various historical and political contexts? What is the outcome of the fact that most prominent scholars and practitioners in Bali today have been educated in the United States and have at

⁷¹ For instance, Balinese often remark that they 'do not know' Old Javanese/Kawi, which is often used in Balinese performance, and so the language needs to be translated for them into Balinese by low-status characters. However, this may say more about Balinese ideas about knowledge and understanding than it does about the linguistic skills of contemporary audiences. For instance, for a Balinese to say that they *know* ([A] *uning* or [B] *tawang*) Kawi would be arrogant, as 'knowing' implies the ability to marshal convincing evidence for something (see Hobart 2000: Chapters Four and Five). By contrast, questions about whether one's interlocutors *nurah* (≈to guess, to think, to imitate/follow someone's custom) result in long discussions of practices and what they are for. However, the researcher's ability to ask this question is limited by their presuppositions about knowledge.

some point collaborated with one of the Western scholars mentioned in the previous chapters in order to produce some of the definitive studies of Balinese theatre and dance?

This chapter will attempt to investigate how Indonesians, whether Balinese or otherwise, set about articulating theatre and dance in Bali. What were the main concerns for Indonesian and Balinese scholars and practitioners *at the time*? The latter qualification is crucial if we consider how often scholars engage in anachronism and apply current standards to quite different eras. The question, then, is not how one might evaluate what was going on in early twentieth-century studies of Balinese dance and theatre from a post-colonial, post-orientalist vantage point, but rather how one might make sense of these writings from as close an approximation of their writers' attitudes as possible. This also highlights the potency of history-writing as a practice of claiming, gaining, and exerting power, in other words as a complex of definitive and powerful articulations. What was, then, the position of theatre and dance (and what do these terms refer to and encompass) in these writings? How did Indonesian and Balinese scholars and practitioners see the task presented to them (by whomever they saw as presenting it to them) in representing Balinese theatre and dance? In what dialogues were they involved?

In order to examine the articulations and power relations of which Indonesian and Balinese writing on theatre and dance was a part, it is imperative to examine the historical contexts, i.e. the changing social, political, and economic circumstances that informed them. Picard has remarked that 'modern Balinese history is essentially a story of conquests—of the displacement of its decision-making centers beyond its shores and the resulting erosion of the authority of its indigenous leaders' (1996b: 17), echoing the standard division of Balinese history into three broad phases: colonialism, New Order (Suharto), and 'reform' (*reformasi*), or, alternatively, 'colonization, Indonesianisation and touristification' (Fox 2011: 35). However, Richard Fox argued that the naturalization of this tripartite periodization of modern

Balinese history ‘privileges an account of Bali’s recent past that is organized around an (albeit highly visible) elite minority and their relationship both to capital and a changing state apparatus’ (2011: 36). In this chapter, I shall maintain this tripartite periodization, but I aim to treat the division itself as an articulation. This enables me to ask not only how the different power configurations involved in each of these periods shaped the relevant studies, but also how and to what extent these studies were part of creating or supporting the dominant discourse that represented each period as coherent and distinct.

From Colonialism to Nationalism

There is very little indigenous writing (at least writing that is currently accessible or that has been cited by earlier scholars) on theatre and dance prior to the founding of the Republic of Indonesia. This should not be surprising given the arguments presented in previous chapters about the dependence of the representation of Balinese practices *as* theatre or *as* dance on variously motivated foreign interest in these subjects. One notable exception, however, and one of the very few cited in later Indonesian studies, is Cokorda Raka Sukawati’s 1925 work ‘De Sanghyang op Bali,’ which was written in Dutch. Cokorda Raka Sukawati belonged to the royal family of Ubud in central Bali and, educated in the Dutch school in Probolinggo and trained as a colonial civil servant (Reuter 2003: 41), was the People’s Council representative for Bali under the Dutch. Cokorda Gdé Sukawati, Raka Sukawati’s father, played a crucial role as a facilitator of the handover of power over Gianyar to the Dutch (MacRae 1997: 340). How were performances like *Sanghyang*,⁷² or the idea of culture more generally, involved in the new position of royalty on the island?

⁷² *Sanghyang* may refer to a number of different performances, but is commonly described in studies of Balinese performance as a form of ‘trance-dance ritual’ (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 108), usually performed by prepubescent girls. During my fieldwork, I only witnessed one *Sanghyang*, performed for tourists in Ubud (16/02/2012).

Cokorda Raka Sukawati was the one who first invited Spies to Ubud in 1925, where he introduced him to the *Sanghyang* trance dance, and effectively initiated the process through which Ubud became a cultural centre in the 1920s and 1930s. Sukawati was also responsible ‘for the selection and composition of the group of Balinese dancers and musicians’ that would perform at the Paris exhibition (Bloembergen 2006: 338). In the previous chapters, I explored the ways in which culture featured in colonial power relationships and representations; but what were the results for and motivations of local élites in this relationship?

Despite having been stripped of most of their political and administrative powers under Dutch rule, some of the old Balinese kings elected to ‘argue their position by cultivating “tradition.” [...] All the kings were “traditional” in their attempts to maintain the link between their status, their political power, and the holding of grand rituals, rituals which were attempts to religiously put the world in order’ (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 194)—and which were studied, one should add, by a host of foreigners. The *Sanghyang* trance dance that Spies witnessed was in fact one of a large number of rituals performed after the 1917 earthquake which had been perceived by a group of kings and priests in Gianyar and Bangli (or, rather, had been represented) as a marker of cosmic disorder that resulted from the neglect of religious duties and the relaxation of caste restrictions (Vickers 2012 [1989]: 190-191). So the articulation of religion-tradition-culture became the new source of power for the royalty and priesthood. In light of this, Raka Sukawati’s success in establishing Ubud as a cultural centre, in close association with Dutch and other expatriates with vested interests in Balinese culture, can be seen as a direct attempt at maintaining and increasing his power in one of the

ways that were still available to him, i.e. by operating at the intersections of his roles as a ritual articulator of the world and as a cultural broker for his foreign overlords.⁷³

In sharp contrast to the wealth of foreign studies on Balinese dance and theatre, there was a marked lack of Indonesian and Balinese studies on these subjects in the following years, until right after the 1965-66 massacres and the rise of Suharto and his New Order regime, when culture started to become, again, a major factor in the argument for Indonesia's cohesion and its national motto of Unity in Diversity. The first notable Indonesian scholar of Balinese dance and drama was Soedarsono, a Yogyakarta aristocrat who was appointed Director of the Dance Academy of Indonesia in Yogyakarta by the Government in 1963, and was later trained in the United States (University of Hawaii and UCLA), sponsored by the John D. Rockefeller III Fund and the (US- and regional-governments-funded) East-West Center. During that time, he published *Dances in Indonesia* (1968), written in English. What did Soedarsono regard as his reasons for writing, what challenges did he face, and whom was he addressing?

Soedarsono presented Bali as distinct: '[O]f the islands of Indonesia, Bali is the most favourable for the development of Indonesian dancing. The reason for the unique development of dancing in Bali lies in the fact that dancing plays a very important role in the religious and social life of the Balinese. Dancing is a very important aspect of the Hindu-Bali (Hindu-Dharma)⁷⁴ religion' (1968: 134). At the same time, with many of its dances going back, according to the author, over 2000 years, Bali was kept firmly under the flag of Indonesian nationalism. His is also an account that emphasized the integrity of a retrospectively-defined Indonesian culture:

⁷³ Indeed, Reuter noted that '[c]ontemporary oral sources (which shall remain anonymous) both within and outside the *puri* agree that his control over *niskala* forces through black magic played a considerable part in his ability to manipulate *sekala* (worldly) affairs to his own advantage' (2003: 41).

⁷⁴ This definition of Balinese religion owes much to the political push for Balinese religion to be recognized nationally, which required it to become Hindu (see Fox 2011: 24).

If we compare the culture of the Indians who came to Indonesia in the first century with the culture of the indigenous people, the Indian culture was relatively higher. Indian culture exercised a great influence on Indonesian culture. This does not mean of course that the Indonesian became similar to the Indians. The original elements of Indonesian culture were preserved and only those element of Indian culture taken over which were suited to the identity of the Indonesian people. Consequently, the Indian cultural influence on Indonesia was an enrichment of Indonesian culture (Soedarsono 1968: 134).

The use of ‘culture,’ ‘influence,’ ‘preserved,’ ‘identity’ here is firmly trapped in the familiar vocabulary of the dominant studies that I examined in Chapter Four. Culture emerges as an articulatory notion by which the unity of Indonesia can be established as a continuous and unitary entity, in an argument that is reminiscent of Mead’s and Spies’s regarding the Balinese ability to integrate those external elements that they saw as compatible with an essential culture which remained unaltered.

This motif is repeated with regards to Islamization. ‘The Islam entering Indonesia did not impose itself on the Indonesian people, but penetrated by peaceful means. Later many Moslems from Arabia came to Indonesia, settling here and influencing the conversion of the people to Islam’ (Soedarsono 1968: 135). Indonesia is described here as an entity with the ability to incorporate and unify virtually anything, literally embodying the principle of the Indonesian national motto (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity), which, just like its point of origin, the *Sutasoma*,⁷⁵ has arguably more of an articulatory than a descriptive character, as it reflects (and promotes?) the ‘interests of royal and priestly actors with a large stake in maintaining a fixed symbolic order’ (Hunter 2007: 27).

The line of preservation, continuity and essentialism was also carefully toed in a later study on *Wayang Wong* (Soedarsono 1984). Soedarsono attempted to trace terms referring to ‘dance’ (*mangigal*, *manapuk*, *manapel* [from *tapel*, mask]) from Ancient Mataram of Central Java (8th-10th centuries), through the East Javanese period (10th-16th centuries), to

⁷⁵ The *Kakawin Sutasoma* is a fourteenth-century composition in Old Javanese, attributed to the court poet Mpu Tantular (see Zoetmulder 1974: 342-349).

contemporary Bali, where the terms *igel* and *tapel* are still in use, even though they have lost their original meaning in Modern Javanese (1984: 35-36).

What is distinctive about this determined tracing to origins is the attempt to locate some perduring essence through all the forces of history, chance, and coincidence. This enables culture to function as one of the concepts around which the nation could be articulated. In addition, there is a case of circularity here similar to that encountered in colonial conceptions of knowledge. This is scissors-and-paste history in Collingwood's sense:

The method by which it proceeds is first to decide what we want to know about, and then go in search of statements about it, oral or written, purporting to be made by actors in the events concerned, or by eyewitnesses of them, or by persons repeating what actors or eyewitnesses have told them, or have told their informants, or those who informed their informants, and so on. Having found in such a statement something relevant to his purpose, the historian excerpts it and incorporates it, translated if necessary and recast into what he considers a suitable style, in his own history (1946: 257).

As a rule, scissors-and-paste history seeks to back a pre-decided argument by the over-interpretation of cherry-picked evidence. This kind of history is a genre of persuasion, which contains an argument, a thesis, in which events are not to be examined *as* events, but in light of 'their place in an imaginary causal-temporal-logical line' (Errington 1979: 239).

Soedarsono's historical account is pure retrojection in which the purpose of the narrative —to argue the derivation and continuity of Bali from Central Java—is pre-decided and drives the argument. Bali once again emerges as a time capsule in which early Javanese culture is preserved, while at the same time Bali is reduced to a medium for accessing something else. This becomes even more pronounced with Soedarsono's various references to genres, styles or stories that are 'still preserved' in Bali, while they originated either in India or in Java: the 'traditional way' of performing stories from the Ramayana 'is preserved in Java and Bali today' (Soedarsono 1984: 4-5); 'it is quite possible that the East Javanese *raket* was adopted by the Balinese, mixed with the Balinese movements, to become the

gambuh' (Soedarsono 1984: 9); 'I believe that masked dance drama enacting the Ramayana may have begun to develop in Bali during the second half of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century when Bali experienced deep influence from East Java' and 'the conclusion can be drawn that the Balinese *wayang ramayana* and *wayang parwa* were a continuation of the East Javanese *wayang* (shadow play), and the Balinese *wayang wong* and *parwa* (dance drama) were a continuation of the East Javanese *wanag wwang*' (Soedarsono 1984: 11-12). In addition, Soedarsono's use of the passive mood withholds direct agency and feigns the role of a mere instrument, or a medium for the transmission (with all the essentialism and circularity of the transmission model; cross-ref. 38), and continuity, of historical truth and tradition.

Apart from these concerns over cementing the unity of Indonesia in an inherited essence of culture, the performing arts also provided an important opportunity for the attraction of tourists. With the effort to rebuild Indonesia's international profile as a friendly tourist destination after the 1965-66 massacres,⁷⁶ however, came, again, the fear of touristification ruining the authenticity and integrity of Indonesian culture. This tension between the need for touristification and the fear of corruption led to the founding of specialised schools for the arts that would simultaneously preserve older forms and would also 'oversee the quality of groups performing for tourists' (Hough 2000: 140)

These tensions were exemplified in Moerdowo's *Reflections on Balinese Traditional and Modern Arts* (1977), the second part of which focused on dramatic arts. Moerdowo, a central Javanese aristocrat, was one of the people who helped set up the Indonesia Dance Academy (ASTI) in Denpasar, as part of an attempt to bring Bali into the modern world.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ *The Miracle of Bali*, released by the BBC in 1969 and so filmed extremely close to the 1965-66 events, presented Bali as an idyllic tableau of peace, art, and harmony, with no trace of atrocity, violence, or conflict. To what extent may the production of the film been part of this effort to re-invent and market Bali as paradise? An answer to this question would require further research into the background of the film's production.

⁷⁷ Hough in his doctoral dissertation on *The College of Indonesian Arts, Denpasar* (2000) translated an excerpt of the preamble to the 1991 decree establishing ASTI, which stated these aims rather straightforwardly: 'due to

His work was central in most subsequent Indonesian and Balinese studies of theatre and dance: he was the patron of Dr Anak Agung Madé Jelantik (1919-2007), an expert on Balinese art and culture and a member of the royal family of Karangasem,⁷⁸ who was, in turn, the patron of I Madé Bandem, one of the senior figures in Balinese dance today.

Moerdowo attempted to create ‘an awareness of the dangers of the possible devastating effect of the new audiences [i.e. tourists], for which the dances are now performed, and to try preserve the sanctity and the technical knowledge of the dances’ (1977: 3). As is evidenced in this passage, the task now was to promote Indonesian culture to the rest of the world (the book was, after all, written in English), while at the same time preserving and protecting a standardized version of that culture.

As I mentioned earlier, the need for a nationally-sanctioned preservation of local diversity that Moerdowo hinted at in the passage above was an intrinsic part of the new government-funded schools, and they fell well within the scope of the nationalist project (Hough 2000). Brett Hough argued that the development of a national education system (in the national language) was one of the most persuasive means of the new Indonesian state to create and maintain national unity out of intrinsic diversity (2000). Another was the extension of a centralized bureaucracy into everyday life down to the village level. This process put Balinese in a peculiar position. With the establishment of the state conservatories, many Balinese performers and scholars were called upon simultaneously to act as government

fast pace of change Balinese dance has to be cultivated/developed (*dibina*) in accordance with a sense of beauty (*rasa keindahan*), sense of harmony/conformity (*rasa keselarasan*) and Indonesian identity (*kepribadian Indonesia*). Art/Dance (*Kesenian/Tari*) has to be of a noble nature (*harus mampu berfungsi yang luhur*) amongst the community in order to maintain Dance (*Seni Tari*) of a high standard in form and content. The wealth of Balinese Dance has to be passed on to the next generation in order for it not to disappear (*tenggelam*). In order to cultivate and develop (*pembinaan dan pembimbingan*) Balinese dance it is essential to establish ASTI as the place to intensively train professional artists (*sebagai wadah tempat menggodok Seniman-Seniman yang akhli*)’ (STSI 1991: 53; Hough 2000: 267).

⁷⁸ Jelantik was also the head of the Society for Balinese Studies, which was founded by a group of academics including Fritz de Boer, Hildred Geertz and others in the early 1980s.

dignitaries while serving at ASTI.⁷⁹ How did they navigate the potentially conflicting demands of performing the new Indonesian identity while at the same time being represented, and representing themselves, as identifiably Balinese? And what are we to make of the tendency of Balinese practitioners to collaborate with Western scholars when writing about Balinese theatre, particularly when we compare it to studies such as Coldiron's (2004), which mainly use the native informants as a resource of 'facts,' while the function of mind belongs to the outsider?

Antagonisms

As I noted earlier, all the leading Balinese scholars of dance and theatre have been educated in the United States and have collaborated with a foreigner in order to produce their most cited, English-language works. All of them also held teaching positions at government-funded institutions, which made them, in effect, civil servants. However, these are also prominent practitioners of Balinese performance. Is there an antagonism between these different roles?⁸⁰

Bandem and deBoer's *Kaja and Kelod: Balinese Dance in Transition* (1981) is one of the first such studies. Bandem, a former representative of the Province of Bali (1988-1998) at the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR-RI), was one of the first Balinese performers to study in the United States (UCLA and Wesleyan), and spent several years as the Director of STSI in Denpasar (Bali) and as the Rector of ISI Yogyakarta.

⁷⁹ ASTI or *Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia* (Academy of Indonesian Dance) was transformed into *Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia* (STSI) in 1988. This transformation marked a professionalization of teaching and performing practices and reflected a centrally-arising demand that all teachers be, in effect, civil servants. STSI was eventually transformed into *Institut Seni Indonesia* (ISI) in 2003, which enabled further professionalization, with ISI's new capacity to award post-graduate degrees (MAs and PhDs), not infrequently to its own staff. For a detailed study of the ASTI/STSI/ISI transformations and its political implications see Hough 2000.

⁸⁰ I use antagonism here in Laclau and Mouffe's sense of the word: as the incommensurability between discourses, and as constitutive of any appearance of objectivity. 'Any kind of social objectivity is reached simply by limiting antagonism' (Laclau and Mouffe 1998: no pagination).

Bandem and deBoer's stated aim was to represent a Balinese view of dance and drama performance, and they attempted to offer a comprehensive overview Balinese performance.

Bandem, under the guidance of deBoer, who was his supervisor, was the first Balinese required to present a history or account of Balinese performance that met a set of western criteria. The authors classified performing arts using the Balinese distinction of *kaja* (≈upstream) and *kelod* (≈downstream). However, given the complexities of these terms and their failure to fit neat Western dichotomies (Hobart 2000: 65-67), the classification was quickly glossed over in terms of sacred or good *versus* demonic or evil and made to fit rather uncomfortably the categorization of dances according to how sacred or secular they are considered, and therefore appropriate for a specific space and audience. Bandem and deBoer thus produced a hybrid 'kaja-secular-kelod' axis (1981: viii). This formulation on the one hand confuses two different taxonomic categories, and on the other attempts to use a quite different style of classification—a Linnaean one that has nested categories, based on increasing degrees of essence, in a manner that, as evidenced by the lack of a class term in Balinese, is quite far from the Balinese tendency not to subsume specific and situated practices under generic terms. Another questionable decision is Bandem and deBoer's treatment of all Balinese performance as 'dance' which, as Hobart argued in 'Rethinking Balinese Dance' (2007), is problematic semantically, historically, and politically, at least in terms of a hegemonic taking over of Balinese categories (which is quite ironic for a book that set itself out to be about *kaja* and *kelod*).

There is, then, a major antagonism here, of Balinese attempting to re-articulate themselves in terms of quite alien, and at least partly incommensurable, categories. The result, 'kaja-secular-kelod,' is an exemplification of the idea of articulation as an attempted resolution of antagonism: the Balinization of a European-derived model. As a practice, however, Balinizing foreign concepts is quite common in Bali as a response to calls for the

demonstration of authenticity and continuity (cross-ref. 171-172). In this sense, Balinizing is also quite performative, in Butler's sense: call something imported by an indigenous name enough times, and the repetition results in the appearance of substance, i.e. of an intrinsic or fundamental aspect of reality (Butler 1999). The example *par excellence* is *budaya* ('culture'; cross-ref. 196). So what are the implications of Balinese having to be both excellent practitioners and to re-imagine themselves in someone else's metaphysics? What other kinds of antagonism might be involved?

I Wayan Dibia, a senior professor at ISI who holds a PhD from UCLA, and one of the organizers of the Bali Arts Festival (*Pesta Kesenian Bali*, or PKB), remarked in his doctoral thesis that the ritualization of certain otherwise secular performance genres is a process that often lends them legitimacy and elevates them to the level of other, more 'traditional' genres (1992: 4). In other words, Hinduism and the Hinduization of everyday life and discourse is not only a form of resistance to the threat of modernity and Indonesianization, but a means by which status is attributed and redistributed within Bali; and it seems that these processes often take place through performance. The implication is that from this new status performances can then be used as a medium for the retrospective construction of tradition, history, and what it is to be Balinese. For instance, *Arja*, a genre which was created in the early twentieth century, is represented as 'a vehicle for conveying traditional values and the Balinese world view' (Dibia 1992: 5). 'The Balinese worldview' is, however, a notion that presents several problems that remain unquestioned by the author: it assumes a single agreed account, conveys the idea of 'the Balinese' as a homogeneous entity, silences tensions and incoherencies and pre-empts the possibility of change—in a word, it articulates a view of a static, harmonious Bali not far from the image promoted by post-*puputan* (cross-ref. 104) colonialism, the nationalist agenda as it was encapsulated above, and the tourist industry. Dibia's argument seems almost self-contradictory. First he pointed out the artificiality of

certain aspects of tradition in Bali and recognized the reasons behind this construction; but then he accepted the idea of ‘the Balinese worldview’ without acknowledging the circularity it entails. Perhaps this would seem less curious if we consider each of these accounts of performance as part of the discourse that corresponds to each of Dibia’s various and sometimes conflicting roles: as a leading practitioner and innovator of Balinese performance, and at the same time a civil servant charged with orchestrating the Bali Arts Festival, the instantiation of Balinese culture and the pinnacle of the industrial production of performance, hegemonized by the increasingly simplistic narrative of Bali as the island of the gods, precisely at the time that religion and culture have been reworked into a consumer-friendly form.

This impossible position may account for the lack of critical engagement with the subject in the major works by Balinese authors when they are writing in English: *Balinese Dance, Drama and Music* (Dibia and Ballinger 2004) presented indigenous approaches to performing arts, touching on a breadth of genres, resulting in a detailed descriptive overview that bypassed the political and economic aspects of performing arts in Bali and so avoided any mention of the possible tensions and complexities of the practices involved. Conversely, Leon Rubin and I Nyoman Sedana’s *Performance in Bali* (2007) focused on four Balinese genres only, which permitted some in-depth discussion of technique, structure, and context. However, despite the abundance of local terminology the authors constantly sought European ‘counterparts’ to Balinese performance (Rubin and Sedana 2007: 10), which rather defeats the task of looking at Balinese performing arts in their own right.

If the silences in the studies above mark an attempt to circumvent antagonisms, other approaches may have been less subtle: I Ketut Kodi, a senior staff member at ISI and a leading public spokesman because of his position as *dalang* (puppeteer) and his renown as a *Topèng* performer, defined ‘the Balinese community’ as an ethnic group of people, mostly

inhabitants of Bali, who have a strong awareness of the cultural unity of Bali and of the unity of the *Agama Hindu*, and who speak the Balinese language (2006: 35-36). Ironically, however, the term used for ‘community’ is *masyarakat*, an Indonesian term of Arabic etymology, overwriting and dubbing both of the points that Kodi stressed as unifying principles of Balinese culture into the jargon of the national performance. But how did Kodi represent Balinese performance and what can we infer of his aims in doing so?

Kodi attempted to trace the origins of masked performance in the pre-Hindu era, claiming both antiquity and nativity (2006: 58-60), which is perhaps not entirely disinterested, considering Kodi’s position as an acknowledged expert of masked dance. What are the implications of claiming the nativity of the genre? I Madé Bandem and I Nyoman Catra (another senior member of staff at ISI who holds a PhD from Wesleyan), both of whom we saw earlier as Coldiron’s and Jenkins’ sources, also traced *Wayang* back to 896 BCE, although they did not deny a vague Javanese ‘influence’ (Bandem 1980: 2-3; Catra 2005: 31-32). However, no matter the specific degree to which each author was prepared to acknowledge a relationship of descent from Javanese performing arts, none of these authors spoke in terms of preservation.

Preservation as a concept valorizes and prioritizes the thing preserved (often described in essentialist terms) rather than the medium of its preservation. When they refer to Bali as a safe-keeper of ancient traditions and values, Balinese authors do it in terms of heritage (*warisan*; see also Kodi 2006: 58) and tradition (*tradisi*; see Kodi 2006: 58), which elevates the recipient of the valuable passed on from the ancestors and singles out Bali as worthy of this inheritance—if not as the only one capable of receiving, appreciating, and keeping it safe for future generations. That the terms used (‘influence/*pengaruh*,’ ‘heritage/*warisan*,’ ‘tradition/*tradisi*’) are either English (because Bandem and Catra have written in English), Indonesian or neologisms with no Balinese equivalent hints at the kind of task these authors

were called to address and the kind of discourse they were responding to. Balinese practitioner-academics are in an impossible position of having at the same time to articulate themselves in foreign terms in order to meet the demands of the international performance and academic circuit, to do it in a way that satisfies the governmental and provincial quotas of tourist-generated income while upholding the national agenda, and at the same time to be able to continue practising in a way that they can recognize and represent as Balinese.

What about the second element that Kodi identified as integral to the Balinese community, religion? Several problems again arise. The cultural unity of the Balinese seems to be argued hand in hand with the supposedly inherently Hindu nature of the island. One of the problems of arguing for Balinese unity based on the island's Hinduism is the history of religious normalization that has taken place in Bali by the *Parisada Hindu Dharma*,⁸¹ which 'tried to "modernize" and "rationalize" Balinese religion according to standards which were in part derived from India, [...] seen as the source of "pure Hinduism"' (Schulte Nordholt 1991: 19).⁸² It seems that the arguments for the uniqueness of Hindu Bali have changed little since the years of the Dutch Sanskritization of the island explored in Chapter Three, if at all.

Catra also attempted to root performance in Hindu concepts, analyzing the figure of the *panasar* (commonly rendered as 'clown' or 'clown servant'; cross-ref. 205, 214-215) in Balinese performance genres as an expression of the concept of *rua-bineda* (or *rwa bhinéda*)—the joining together of contradictory principles (2005). Interestingly, the Bali Arts Festival yearly theme often features such concepts as well: *Désa, Kala, Patra* (from the *Bhagavad Gita* XVII.20) in 2011, and *Paras-Paros* in 2012 (these will be explored further in Chapter Nine; cross-ref. 261-268). The relationship between Balinese performance and

⁸¹ The *Parisada Hindu Dharma* is the Indonesian Hindu Dharma Council, the bureaucratic body responsible for the national administration of the *Agama Hindu* (Hindu religion) in Indonesia. For more information about the Hindu Dharma Council's role in 'educating the Hindu community and thereby facilitating its integration within a unified Indonesian nation' see Fox 2011: 56-60.

⁸² For a rebuttal of the fantasy of the notion of Hinduism as a single religion, originating in the twentieth century, see Badrinath 1986.

Hindu-ness is one of the elements that set Bali apart, and also represents Balinese performance as truly Balinese (rather than Indonesian). Yet, the concepts expanded on in Catra's thesis are almost entirely those stressed by the Indonesian state: *agama*, *pendidikan*, *budi pekerti*, *adat*, *budaya*, *gejala social*, *pemerintahan* [religion, character education, tradition or custom, culture, social phenomena, and governance respectively]. Catra also failed to note when the concepts he entertained were Indonesian and when Balinese, moving seamlessly from one register to the other and giving the impression of a tension-free relationship between them.

More recently, however, Dibia has assumed a critical position with regard to the tensions that face Balinese performance: 'Balinese performing arts [...] seem trapped in the struggle between the mutually attractive currents of *balinization* and *globalization*' (Dibia 2012a: 2).⁸³ Dibia defined 'balinization' (*balinisasi*) as the tendency of Balinese to bring art back to its original shape and identity (*bentuk dan identitas aslinya*), which will protect it from and negate the effects of 'outside and foreign culture' (*budaya luar dan asing*), and he pointed out the similarities of this process with the 'balinization' that took place during the Dutch colonial government's efforts to purify and 'authenticate' Balinese culture in the 1920s. Globalization (*globalisasi*), on the other hand, he described as the attempt to integrate Balinese culture into the global situation, in an effort to make it more accessible to the rest of the world (Dibia 2012a: 2). Dibia presented the Bali Arts Festival as a forum in which such tensions can be negotiated at a high level (because of the quality control that determines whether a performance can be incorporated into the festival programme), at once encouraging innovation and promoting the revival of more traditional or classical genres (2012a: 30). However, the Arts Festival can also act as a model and so impede originality and innovation, as Balinese artists are often quick to imitate and copy what has been successful at the Arts

⁸³ See Appendix A, note 5.1.

Festival without much consideration (Dibia 2012a: 33)—and, I would add, because the people in charge of the quality control and alignment with the yearly theme are consistently the same. What is, then, their role as enunciators, and quite literally the judges, of ‘Balinese culture’? Is this a case of Foucauldian discipline and punish, of control masquerading as quality control (1977: 99, 174)? What are the performances that make up contemporary Bali, and how coherent are they? What are the current practices through which tradition is continuously invented in contemporary Bali? These questions will be explored in detail in Part Two. However, a few introductory remarks about the Arts Festival may be useful in understanding the range of tensions and antagonisms involved.

The International Bali Arts Festival (PKB)

The Bali Arts Festival, established in 1979, exemplifies several of the ambiguities of contemporary Balinese performance. It was organized by state-run institutions in collaboration with the local art establishment and was meant as a “cultural showcase”, displaying an authorized version of Balinese arts and culture to a mainly local, but also national and international audience, in keeping with the explicit aims of Indonesian cultural policy’ (Noszlopy 2002: 1). But how neatly do these different audiences (local, national, and international) line up? What are the implications of the Arts Festival presenting itself unproblematically to this undifferentiated audience?

Dibia counted the Arts Festival among the contributing factors to changing Balinese performing arts, together with modernity, tourism, the formal dance training in national education and government-funded schools, which is becoming the norm, and the mass media, which, in Dibia’s view, make audiences lazy and passive (2012a: 19-34). Dibia has kept a more critical stance than most. However, as a professor at ISI, a member (the head in 2012) of the Arts Festival’s organizational committee, educated both in Indonesia and the United

States, and also a well-known and well-respected performer, his practice summarizes the tensions that have trapped Bali in a constellation of antagonisms. And yet Dibia is one of the people who is called, by virtue of his role, to negotiate and iron these antagonisms out. Perhaps it is no coincidence that, in introducing the *Paras-Paros* Bali Arts Festival theme of 2012, Dibia stated that he expected to see performances that emphasized harmony and harmonization (*kerukunan*, *keharmonisan*), solidarity (*kebersamaan*) and comfort (*kenyamanan*) (*The Bali Post* 2011). What are the implications of this emphasis on harmony? Fox has pointed out that the discourse of ‘balance and harmony’ was integral to the New Order’s effort to repair its public face after the 1965-66 killings, in large part via a ‘bureaucratized promotion of “the arts”’ (2011: 300). What does a myth ‘designed to gloss over massacre’ (Fox 2011: 300) entail when used in 2012 in a context like the Bali Arts Festival?

As a pan-Balinese event, the Arts Festival purports to provide opportunities for the various regencies (*kabupaten*) as well as individual artists to claim their uniqueness and promote their work, while at the same time aiming at presenting an image of Bali as the paradisaal and harmonious place that is being peddled in the international tourist market. Inherent in the Arts Festival is the equation of culture with *kesenian* (or *seni budaya*); culture is art, and in particular artistic products that can be packaged and showcased in ways accessible to the national and international market. One of its stated tasks, as Governor of Bali Madé Mangku Pastika observed in *The Bali Post*, is to preserve the Balinese *taksu* [spiritual charisma; cross-ref. 199] (Pastika and Puspayoga 2008), a notion that has been made to stand for the essence of Bali and its performing arts (Dibia 2012b).

However, although the Arts Festival is a mostly free series of events, it comes pre-packaged with the sets of relations that govern capitalist and money-based exchanges (even if the monetary exchange either precedes the actual event or is deferred until after its

conclusion, and takes the form of capitalization on fame and reputation). Huge amounts are invested each year in the festival, and huge amounts in turn flow in various directions—but rarely in the direction of the lowly dancers who may comprise the largest part of a performance, yet possess neither the stardom of well-known performers, nor the status of officials and other connoisseurs who organize the events.

The tensions explored above could be described as a Laclauian antagonism between nationalism and the need for Bali to remain a self-standing culture to be looked at, and marketed, on its own terms. Moreover, granted the scale of the American academic and performing arts investment in Bali, there is the post-colonial issue of Balinese thinking about themselves becoming increasingly Americanized. Bandem, Dibia, Catra, and Sedana are all American-trained—and all of them also paired up with a Westerner when writing about Balinese performance in English. What is their impact on Balinese self-understandings? In the previous chapter, I argued that Balinese theatre has been a medium in the search for something else. How different was its role in the studies I explored in this chapter? And what did Balinese and other Indonesians use it for?

What is the Study of Balinese Performance For?

Balinese scholars and artists found themselves in a position that called for the negotiation of conflicts that extended from religion, to language and history. However, they continued to single out Bali and capitalize on Balinese uniqueness, modifying the argument of preservation only slightly to fit their own claim at authenticity. The tensions around innovation and traditionalism are played out and effectively anaesthetized in the state-funded platform of the Arts Festival, while questions of capital, class, caste, and gender, are carefully circumvented and papered over. In addition, these same people are the main interlocutors of the major Western scholars of Balinese performance. What are, then, the critical questions

used to interrogate the Balinese material? And how has the study of Bali been related to work on the neighbouring island of Java?

In contrast to Bali, Javanese theatre has been met with some exciting critical and theoretical work. For example, Ward Keeler (1987) undertook an eloquent and convincing study of the relationship between Javanese shadow plays and Javanese perceptions of selves, status, and power as they are represented by characters, performers and audiences of *Wayang Kulit*, producing a detailed analysis both of the epistemology of the genre and its cultural context. Victoria Clara van Groenendael's approach to Javanese performance practices, both from performers' and from spectators' perspectives (1985, 1993, 2008), based on rigorous and extensive fieldwork, is particularly informative and useful. However, one of the most intriguing arguments about Javanese theatre, marking a turning point in the way to approach other people's theatre, is Alton Becker's essay on text-building in *Wayang Kulit* (1979). Becker argued that rather than employing Western ideas of text and plot, one should start with considering the metaphysics-in-practice of the subjects of study. He then noted that in contrast to the temporal linearity of the standard Aristotelian plot, Javanese theatre tends to be organized around coincidence. Interestingly, Artaud, prompted by Balinese theatre, 'sought to liberate audiences from linear storytelling' (Zarrilli *et al.* 2010: 518). However, none of the studies of Balinese performance have engaged either Artaud's or Becker's insights, or in fact any of the compelling studies mentioned above. Artaud may have revolutionized French thought through his impact on Deleuze and Guattari, but nobody has endeavoured to bring his insights to bear on the very thing that was his object of study. It seems that in this as in many respects, as Korn has noted (1925), 'Bali is apart.' Why is this the case? What has theatre done for the various people involved? What have they claimed Balinese performance is, and what does it do? The problem of approaching Balinese performance, then, is not just a question of translation, of Balinese being interpreted, and also

self-articulating, in the enunciative English language and on alien terms. In Part Two, I shall argue that Balinese, even the experts whose work I explored in this chapter, discuss performance in different ways depending on the context and the role or the capacity in which they are speaking. What, then, is at issue and how might one proceed?

To return to the issues raised in Chapter Four, how does Schechner's 'efficacy-entertainment braid' (2006: 79-80), or Goffman's idea that events on stage lack 'real' consequences (1974: 123-155), address specific occasions of Balinese performance in the terms they were discussed by Balinese themselves? A few brief examples should make the problems clear. Several of my Balinese informants expressed the view that certain performances are dangerous and may have grave results (malfunctioning equipment, sickness, even death) for anyone involved should something go awry. In particular, one of the Balinese mothers with whom I spent time during my fifteen-month fieldwork in Bali in 2011-2012 vehemently refused to watch *Calonarang* performances because she was not 'brave enough' (*sing bani*).⁸⁴ As said earlier, it may be possible to apply Schechner's theory of efficacy/entertainment in this case, but how would this aid one's understanding of Balinese practices, and what would be accomplished?

Such an approach also presupposes that Balinese work with a dichotomy of efficacy versus entertainment, which is open to question, not least because entertainment is itself a complicated notion with a singular European history (Dyer 1992), but also because, as I shall argue in the second part of the thesis, Balinese may formulate a very different relationship between efficacy and entertainment, which involves a conception of human nature notably missing from both Balinese and Western scholarly accounts: a performance cannot be effective unless it is also entertaining.

⁸⁴ There are other considerations in not being *bani*; these will be explored in Chapter Eight (cross-ref. 228-229).

In addition, as mentioned in the Introduction, Balinese in non-academic contexts tend to talk about performances, natural disasters, and historical or mythical events using the same terms and registers. One such term, *sakti* (a word difficult to translate, but which can be glossed as unusual or counterfactual efficacy, a reason why things may not go as they should), can account for both the successes and failures of a ‘theatrical’ event and, for instance, for the reasons why Bali succumbed to the Javanese and became a part of the Majapahit empire (which, on at least one occasion during my research, was equated in performance with Indonesia; cross-ref. 205-208). On other occasions a performer’s ability can be discussed in terms of *wibawa* (which can be crudely glossed as ‘presence’), which is what also characterizes good rulers in Balinese discussions of politics. Or, to address a different aspect of the issue, consider the following case: one of my informants accompanied me to a *Lègong Topèng* performance in Kètèwèl, and informed me that the priest told him that one of the masks did not feel like dancing that night. Is this sufficiently explained by, for instance, Emigh’s idea that masked dances are practices that express and reinforce the belief in ancestral spirits (1996: 154)? That reading would silence a different range of possibilities, for instance the priest’s claim at an intimate connection with *niskala*, the unseen world, or even my own informant’s interests in claiming a relation to a powerful priest, while at the same time proving himself useful to me and my research, so creating a debt on my part.

The people involved in the examples above did not seem concerned, at least not primarily, with tracing the limits of ritual or theatre. The usefulness of models like Schechner’s or Emigh’s in these instances seems limited. So why export them, if all one would end up with is not a better understanding of the object of study, but a better understanding of the models used? This brings to the fore the weakness of these models’ analytical power: just like set theory, that branch of mathematics which can explain any set of random numbers, *a priori* knowledge of theatre the world over can fit anything, anywhere,

anytime, to a Procrustean bed of over-interpretation. On what grounds can the analyst ignore the participants' alternative—and possibly entirely coherent—ways of discussing their own practices? And how might one take these into account?

In summary, this chapter addressed the issue of how Indonesian and Balinese academics have imagined or represented Balinese theatre. In Chapter Six, I shall attempt to draw together and juxtapose the various ways of representing Balinese theatre. What have been the different broad frames of imagining Bali? What are the governing concepts and concerns? What are the purposes of this knowledge? What and whom is it for?

Chapter Six: What is Balinese Theatre For?

In Chapters Four and Five, I examined the ways foreign and local (Indonesian and Balinese) scholars and practitioners have represented Balinese theatre and dance, and the complex dialogue of which they were part. In this chapter, I shall juxtapose the different broad frames of imagining Balinese performance. What did the various scholars claim theatre/dance⁸⁵ to be, and what is it for?

There seem to be two broad modes in which Bali in general and Balinese performance in particular are discussed. For Friederich, Bali ‘expresses the bold spirit of the nation’ (1959: 1), while Clifford Geertz focused on the ‘expressive nature of the Balinese state’ (1980a: 13). For de Zoete and Spies, dance was the expression of a fundamental attitude of the Balinese (1974 [1938]: 3, 5; cross-ref. 116). In Emigh’s analysis of masked performance, ‘both the macrocosmos (*buwana agung*) and the microcosmos (*buwana alit*) made in its image “find expression in the body of every man”’ (1996: 201), while Coldiron saw ‘universal types [...] expressed’ in Balinese and Japanese masks (2005: 228). It seems, then, that for many of these scholars, what Bali and Balinese performance do is to ‘express’ something, an abstract entity or an essence. But what is meant by ‘expression’ and what do such claims presuppose?

On the other hand, Moerdowo categorized different Balinese performances according to their function (1977): they could serve as rituals, be part of an exorcism, or they could be used as entertainment on a variety of occasions. Emigh also examined the function of masked performance (1996), while Schechner proposed several possible functions of performance, not only in Bali but anywhere in the world, as part of his efficacy/entertainment braid (2006: 46). What are the assumptions on which this functionalist representation of performance hinges, and what are its implications for the study of Balinese practices in contemporary

⁸⁵ I use theatre/dance here to indicate the problems of foisting a largely meaningless, as explained in previous chapters, distinction on Balinese.

Bali? How might expression and function be linked in these representations of Balinese performance?

Expression

From Friederich to Geertz and the anthropological studies presented in Chapter Three, Bali has a long history of being represented as a medium through which an essence can be ‘pressed out’ (cross-ref. 91-92), which is the first meaning of the verb ‘to express,’ the second being ‘to portray, to represent.’⁸⁶ When it was viewed as expressive, theatre was largely treated as a medium for the study of something else, i.e. the nature of Balinese politics (Geertz 1980a), or the essential Balinese character (Bateson and Mead 1942). This is perhaps to be expected, as theatre was not these scholars’ ostensible object of study. But how should one assess the fact that theatre in these formulations was expressive of whatever it was the scholars were studying?

The idea of expression reduces the subject of expression to a medium for the object expressed, the latter always represented as more valuable and worthy of scholarly analysis than the former. There is a parallel here with metaphor, which consists of a tenor and a vehicle, where the first is infinitely prioritized over the second. This similarly echoes Derrida’s point about signification, whereby the signifier is less important than the signified (1997 [1967]). Behind all this is the pervasive idealism of European thinking: what is expressed, or what is highlighted by a metaphor, in other words the *signifié*, is more important than the more tangible ‘source’ to which it is made to correspond. The purpose of a study, for example the analysis of the core of Balinese politics or the essential Balinese character, seems to predetermine the way theatre is treated. What, then, about studies that did

⁸⁶ ‘express, v.1.’ OED (2014). [Online.] Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/66738?rskey=PW7B3G&result=3&isAdvanced=false>. [Accessed 20/05/2014]

take Balinese theatre, which they postulated as a positivity, as their primary focus? What is Balinese theatre supposed to express for them?

De Zoete and Spies remarked that ‘[t]he human beings on the Balinese stage do not show individual emotion on their faces, which are stylized to an expression typical of the character represented. [...] The extreme impersonality of Balinese dancing is disconcerting to some people, and it is perhaps all the more striking because it is accompanied by every conceivable aptitude for expression’ (Spies 1973 [1938]: 24). Types and characters are, then, expressed *via* the faces and bodies of dancers whose individuality is ‘not shown.’ De Zoete and Spies formulated their observations in a way that gives grounds to question whether ‘individuality’ and ‘personality’ are, in fact, meaningful concepts for Balinese. However, subsequent studies moved in a different direction, looking for different kinds of universals expressed in Balinese theatre, among other ‘Oriental examples’ (Barba and Savarese 1991: 30-31), as in Emigh’s assertion about the macrocosmos and the microcosmos that are expressed in every body (1996: 201) and Coldiron’s hunt for the “universal” types [...] expressed in masks of Bali and Japan’ (2005: 228). There is a distinct circularity in these propositions. ‘Types’ and ‘examples’ cannot be recognized as expressions of universals, unless the universals are already known. But universals cannot be known except through their expressions. Arguably, what these propositions are doing is to represent Balinese performance *as expressive* of universals, and so, by taking the second definition of ‘expression’ according to the OED,⁸⁷ to represent performance as a representation of whatever the scholar is searching for.

Despite the differences in their approaches (examined in Chapter Four), these studies are premised on one of the foundational ideas of Performance Studies proposed by Turner: ‘[c]ultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and

⁸⁷ Expression is a ‘[m]anner or means of representation in language; wording, diction, phraseology. [...] A word, phrase, or form of speech.’ See ‘expression, n.’ OED (2014). [Online]. Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/66747?redirectedFrom=expression>. [Accessed 23/05/2014]

theatrical performances' (Schechner and Appel 1990: 1).⁸⁸ In other words, what theatre expresses is culture. But how is culture and what is meant by 'express' understood by the different scholars and practitioners involved, and what are the underlying assumptions with which it is articulated? How can theatre be a vehicle for the expression of both 'culture,' which is specific to the people involved, and 'universals'?

Interestingly, Barba termed the universal he was seeking 'pre-expressivity' (1991: 186): 'Theatre anthropology postulates that there exists a basic level of organisation common to all performers and defines this level as *pre-expressive*' (1991: 187). The idea of 'pre-expressivity,' apart from being impossible to formulate without presupposing that 'expressivity' is inherent to theatre, is part of an ontology premised on the concept of the 'organisation' of a 'totality': 'When we see an organism alive in its totality, we know from anatomy, biology and physiology that this organism is organised on various levels. Just as there is a cellular level of organisation and a level of organisation of the organs, and of the various systems in the human body (nervous, arterial, etc.), so we must consider that the totality of a performer's performance is also made up of distinct levels of organisation' (Barba and Savarese 1991: 187).⁸⁹ Barba here cast performance in an organic metaphor reminiscent of structural functionalism:

This pre-expressive substratum is included in the expression level, in the totality perceived by the spectator. However, by keeping this level separate during the work process, the performer can work on the pre-expressive level, *as if*, in this phase, the principal objective was the energy, the presence, the *bios* of his actions and not their meaning.

The pre-expressive level thought of in this way is therefore an operative level: not a level which can be separated from expression, but a pragmatic category, a praxis, the aim of which, during the process, is to strengthen the performer's scenic *bios*.

Theatre anthropology postulates that the pre-expressive level is at the root of the various performing techniques and that there exists, independently of traditional culture, a transcultural 'physiology'. In

⁸⁸ Schechner and Appel were quoting Turner, from a Planning Meeting for the World Conference on Ritual and Performance (1980).

⁸⁹ It is the cliché of organisational levels that Deleuze and Guattari critiqued in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), with its rhizomatic structure.

fact, pre-expressivity utilises principles for the acquisition of presence and the performer's life. The results of these principles appear more evident in codified genres where the technique which puts the body in form is codified independently of the result/meaning.

Thus theatre anthropology confronts and compares the techniques of actors and dancers at the transcultural level, and, by means of the study of scenic behaviour, reveals that certain principles governing pre-expressivity are more common and universal than would first have been imagined (Barba and Savarese 1991: 188).

The first question that arises, is: If the pre-expressive cannot be separated from expression, how can it be identified at all? But does the invocation of the idea of 'levels,' adequately address this aforementioned circularity?

Barba's answer was that the pre-expressive can only be separated from 'the various levels of organisation [...] by means of abstraction, in a situation of analytical research and during the technical work of composition done by the actor or dancer' (1991: 7). Unlike '[o]ccidental performance study [which] has for the most part concentrated on theories and utopias, neglecting an empirical approach to the performer's problems[,] ISTA directs its attention to this "empirical territory" with the objective of going beyond the specialisations of particular disciplines, techniques or aesthetics. This is a question of understanding not technique but the secrets of technique, which one must possess before one can go beyond technique' (Barba and Savarese 1991: 7). Ultimately, Barba was looking for the 'bare and essential action' (2000: 62, 66). He claimed that '[p]erformers can reduce an action to its essence, to its impulse. They know how to distil each sequence, keeping only the essential actions, elaborating them phase by phase, transforming—to use literary terms—prose to poetry' (Barba 1995: 156).

As an epistemological approach, what Barba called 'empirical' is directly opposed to 'the empiricism thesis,' i.e. that '[w]e have no source of knowledge in S[subject area] or for the concepts we use in S other than sense experience' (Markie 2013: no pagination). Barba's empiricism, in its effort to distil 'the elementary: the technique of techniques' (2009: no

pagination) from practice, in effect linked an aprioristic and circular model of essential action to what happens in performance. In an empirical approach according to the empiricism thesis above, by contrast, the ‘secrets of technique’ would be inaccessible, if it is possible to postulate them at all. However, beyond the accuracy of Barba’s use of philosophical terms, further questions arise: How do ‘the secrets of technique’ become accessible, by whom, and for what purpose? How are ‘codified genres’ to be decoded? And what is the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (1991) a ‘dictionary’ for?

As in Swellengrebel’s and Friederich’s idea of culture as a substance that can be transmitted and sifted into categories (indigenous, derived, corrupted; cross-ref. 85-88), there is in the capacity to identify and put ‘secrets’ to use an inherent bias in favour of the people in a position to decode the ‘codified genres.’ This process is reminiscent of the Judeo-Christian practices of assembling and interpreting codices (Kelber 1983; Goody 1987; van der Toorn 2007), both of which bear certain degrees of the power and authority to articulate (and silence or eliminate) and to make meaning that remains inaccessible to others—even if these others are the regular users of the code, as in the case of Barba’s ‘Oriental examples’ (1991: 30-31), i.e. Japanese, Indian, or Balinese.

In addition, in creating a ‘dictionary’ of performance, Barba was ultimately casting performance as language. However, he was not the first to do so. Turner, in the Planning Meeting for the World Conference on Ritual and Performance in 1980, which effectively inaugurated Performance Studies as a discipline, claimed that ‘[a] performance is declarative of our shared humanity, yet it utters the uniqueness of particular cultures. We will know one another better by entering one another’s performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies’ (quoted in Schechner and Appel 1990: 1). Performance ‘declares’ and ‘utters,’ which makes it into a transcendental agent capable of thinking, uttering, and so on. It also

possesses ‘grammars and vocabularies.’ This creates the potential to strap on it a series of linguistic notions: it has rules, it can be translated, and codified into a dictionary.

Turner proceeded to explain that ‘[a] performance is a *dialectic* of “flow,” that is, spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and “reflexivity,” in which the central meanings, values and goals of a culture *are seen* “in action,” as they shape and explain behavior’ (quoted in Schechner and Appel 1990: 1; emphases added). Its experts are not necessarily its native users. Performance, in this sense, can have a meaning, and therefore it can have interpreters.

Barba later amplified the idea of meaning-production: ‘Every culture must have three aspects: material production by means of particular techniques, biological reproduction making possible the transmission of experience from generation to generation, and the production of meanings. It is essential for a culture to produce meanings. If it does not, it is not a culture’ (Barba 1995: 5). If one can get to the meaning, then, they can get to the (circularly defined) culture—if they cannot see something as meaningful, without any room afforded to the natives to discuss their meaning-making practices, it must not be culture. So can the natives ever be expert interpreters of their own culture? That would render the scholar, the exnominated subject who ‘sees’ the ‘central meanings, values and goals of a culture’ above, irrelevant and obsolete. This definition presents a superiority of the knower over the known similar to that of the earliest anthropological studies of Bali (cross-ref. Chapter Three). In addition, casting performance as ‘a dialectic’ may be less innocuous than it seems at first. A dialectic is anything but spontaneous. It is governed by clear rules of logic (Hegel 2010 [1816]) or contradiction (Marx 1992 [1867]; see also Laclau 2005: 84). By whose rules does this performance-as-language operate?

Furthermore, language seems to be only a short step away from text: ‘The word text, before referring to a written or spoken, printed or manuscripted text, meant “a weaving

together”. In this sense, there is no performance which does not have “text”. [...] It is not important to define what an action is, or to determine how many actions there may be in a performance. What is important is to observe that the actions come into play only when they weave together, when they become texture: “text” (Barba and Savarese 1991: 68-69). Barba was not the first to introduce the idea that performance can be ‘read’; in the related field of dance, it is preceded by Susan Foster’s *Reading Dancing* (1986), which treated dance as a text that can be read—an organized semantic structure. More generally, the tendency to narrativize and textualize one’s object of study characterized what Hobart referred to as the ‘Literary Turn’ in social sciences (1999), from New Historicism to the work of Gayatri Spivak (1988) to Homi Bhabha (1990) and Arjun Appadurai (1990).

Barba’s view was echoed in Schechner’s approach to performance, although Schechner qualified it in his later writings: ‘Terms such as “dramatic text” and “performance text” are commonly used. [...] I choose not to use them here because although “text” can be understood dynamically, as an action, it is in current use tightly linked to writing both in a specific literary sense and in its extended Derridean meaning’ (2006: 227). He went on to explain the origin of the term from weaving, as in Barba’s case, and clarified that ‘[u]nderstood performatively, texts are transformable and pliable sign and/or symbol systems. Every text invites being remade into new texts’ (Schechner 2006: 227). What is, then, involved in treating performance as text?⁹⁰

There is a twofold issue here. On the one hand, what is the status of text in such studies? If scholarship is about expert analysis, what is the analysis of texts for? On the other hand, does treating performance as text take into account the textual practices of the people whose performance, culture, or life is treated as a text? How people engage with texts is not

⁹⁰ Ricoeur’s ‘The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as Text’ (1973) is at the root of this discussion and may account for some subsequent attempts, including Geertz’s, to textualize several objects of study. Ricoeur argued that the interpretive methods of hermeneutics may be applied to the objects of study of social sciences, which can be ‘read’ as coherent wholes subject to textual analysis.

the same everywhere—so how could ‘approaching something as a text’ work in the same way everywhere, except by the imposition of the scholar’s approach to texts and its naturalization? By extension, treating performance, or indeed culture, life, or anything else, as a text avoids, or even conceals, the fact that textualization is a practice, and so is historically situated, taking place in specific contexts, with specific purposes.

A text, in the sense used here by Barba, i.e. a code (cross-ref. 184-185), unlike context, is finalized (Bakhtin 1986: 147). Because a text is either conceived or conceivable as a finished product, a totality or positive essence, it follows that textualizing is a form of totalizing, and so, in Laclau’s terms, ideological (1990: 92). This implies the ‘non-recognition of the precarious character of any positivity, of the impossibility of any ultimate suture’ (Laclau 1990: 92). Viewing performance, culture, or life in general as a text excludes the possibility of dialogue, while casting that text as gerundive. The text is *to be read* and interpreted by the knowing subject, who is, invariably, someone other than the people involved in its production (or rather, in the textualized practices under consideration). In other words, claiming that performance can be viewed as a text, i.e. a totality, is itself an assertion of power, secured by the simultaneous assertion that this text is not readily available to everyone, but a secret, a code accessible only to the few equipped with the knowledge or tools to decode it.

According to Bakhtin, ‘[a] code is a deliberately established, killed context’ (1986: 147). By the practice of textualizing, as opposed to contextualizing, scholars can address their objects of study as if they were codes rather than contexts, texts rather than situated, dialogic practices. In addition, treating performance as text renders the former susceptible to textual analysis, that is, ‘the invention of voices behind texts to avoid having to analyze the modes of implication of the subject in discourses; the assigning of the originary as said and unsaid in the text to avoid placing discursive practices in the field of transformations where they are

carried out' (Foucault 1998 [1979]: 416). This allows the exclusion of the possibility of archaeological and discursive forms of analysis and transforms a potentially dialogic or polyphonic practice into a monologue.

Function

In the introduction to this chapter, I noted that the second major idea that features in scholarly accounts of Balinese performance is function. According to the OED, 'function,' can mean any of the following:

- 1.1 In etymological sense: The action of performing; discharge or performance of (something). [...]
- 2.2 Activity; action in general, whether physical or mental. Of a person: Bearing, gestures. [...]
- 3.3 The special kind of activity proper to anything; the mode of action by which it fulfils its purpose. [...]
- d.3.d Computers. Any of the basic operations in a computer, esp. one that corresponds to a single instruction. [...]
4. a.4.a The kind of action proper to a person as belonging to a particular class, esp. to the holder of any office; hence, the office itself, an employment, profession, calling, trade. [...]
5. a.5.a A religious ceremony; orig. in the Roman Catholic Church.⁹¹

Even from this cursory perusal of possible meanings, it seems that function has too varied a status to permit any clear definition. How, then, is 'function' used in studies of theatre?

Moerdowo classified dances according to their function. Performances were described in terms of what they were supposed to do, and so were the different characters: dances 'serve as part of religious ritual' (Moerdowo 1977: 6), playing a part 'for exorcism of evil, manifested in diseases, and natural calamities in a village' (Moerdowo 1977: 7); they 'entertain guests in the Puri, or the villages, who participate in the Temple festivals' (Moerdowo 1977: 8), while they can also 'entertain secular audiences' (Moerdowo 1977: 12). Moerdowo's description does have the merit of a relatively clearly defined use of

⁹¹ 'function, v.' OED (2014). [Online] Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/75477?rskey=0kGeMi&result=2&isAdvanced=false>. [Accessed 23/05/2014]

performance. However, the idea of ‘function’ remained loose at best, while what it meant to be entertained was not addressed at all. Why use it, then? What does it do, and for whom? And what is ignored when the focus is on pinpointing functions within an abstract system, without reference to any of the people involved and on whom the performance supposedly functions?

In Chapter Four, I introduced Schechner’s efficacy-entertainment braid (1988: 112-169; 2006: 79-80), by which performance is placed on a continuum between ritual (associated with efficacy) and theatre (associated with entertainment). I have already touched on some of the problems with such concepts. For one, it is unclear how efficacy is to be measured. However, it is clear *on whose authority* it is measurable: the analyst’s. The other term of this antithesis is equally revealing: entertainment. How are we to understand entertainment here, especially given Schechner’s intercultural scope? Dyer has argued that entertainment has a distinct cultural history:

[E]ntertainment is not simply a way of describing something found equally in all societies at all times. [...] A key figure in the emergence of ‘entertainment’ is Molière, who in having to elaborate a defence of his plays developed a new definition of what the theatre should do. The Church had attacked him for not edifying, the salons for his refusal to conform to the taste for polite divertissement and the critics for not obeying the rules of art. His defence was to deny that those concepts of what he should do were relevant to his real purpose, which was to provide pleasure—and the definition of that was to be decided by ‘the people.’ [...] Against salons, Church and critics Molière set the court [...] and the gallery; against received élite opinion he asserted populism. In so doing, he severed art from entertainment—not, it is true, in his own practice but in theory. Entertainment became identified with what was not art, not serious, not refined. This distinction remains with us—art is what is edifying, élitist, refined, difficult, whilst entertainment is hedonistic, democratic, vulgar, easy. That the distinction is harmful, false to the best in both what is called art and what is called entertainment, has often been commented upon. But it remains one built into our education and, as we shall see, the decisions of television programmers (1992: 6).

What would be involved were we to talk about entertainment interculturally? If entertainment and the value judgments attached to it are ‘built into our education’ and television programming, is it safe to assume that it carries the same associations elsewhere? Is it even a meaningful distinction to be made in Balinese performance? How do Balinese talk about entertainment? As I shall explain at length in Part Two, I have found that different people use different terms, and different registers, when they talk about different genres and different situations. This is, then, not just a question of what is being talked about, but also in what circumstances the discussion is taking place, and what roles the various interlocutors assume. This would necessarily force one to consider whether, for instance, people are discussing, or enunciating in Foucault’s sense (1972). I shall return to these questions in Part Two.

However, Schechner further complicated the issue of entertainment, by claiming that it is merely one of the seven functions of performance:

- 1 to entertain
 - 2 to make something that is beautiful
 - 3 to mark or change identity
 - 4 to make or foster community
 - 5 to heal
 - 6 to teach, persuade, or convince
 - 7 to deal with the sacred and/or the demonic.
- These are not listed in order of importance. For some people one or a few of these will be more important than others. But the hierarchy changes according to who you are and what you want to get done. Few if any performances accomplish all of these functions, but many performances emphasize more than one (2006: 46).

In other words, Schechner placed both ‘efficacy’ and ‘entertainment’ within the range of possible functions of performance. Conceivably, then, a performance can be effective in its function as entertainment, at which point the continuum breaks down.⁹² Earlier I observed that Emigh also embraced a functionalist understanding of performance: ‘[Topèng] has an immediacy of impact, range of signification, and purposiveness within social mechanisms

⁹² Other terms in the possible functions are equally vague and problematic: ‘identity,’ ‘community,’ ‘the sacred.’ In addition, one might reasonably ask what is excluded in Schechner’s model. To paraphrase Baudrillard’s critique of Foucault’s notion of power, if performance is everywhere, then performance is nowhere (1987: 72).

that are missing in most of the theatre available to us; yet it is not so alien as to be beyond our ken or to lack appeal as a theatrical model' (1996: 192). What is involved in this mechanical metaphor ('impact,' 'mechanisms') for performance? What is the relationship between that and Barba's organic metaphor?

On the one hand, the very definition or understanding of performance by way of its function is somewhat tautological: as mentioned earlier, 'to function' means 'to perform one's duty or part; to operate; to act' and the first meaning of 'function' (noun) according to the OED is 'the action of performing; discharge or performance of (something).'⁹³ In addition, the idea of mechanical function rests on several assumptions: the parts of a system, and this holds true in the case of Barba's organic totality, are interdependent and cannot function on their own. The normal state of the mechanism is one in which it functions smoothly; for organisms, this is also assumed to be a natural state, at which point it is reasonable to question whether this efficient, productive and smooth order is how Balinese imagine the natural state of the world (cross-ref. 244) and indeed what their ideas of nature are, if they even make a nature:culture dichotomy.⁹⁴ By whose criteria is efficiency, productivity and the degree of smoothness to be assessed?

In addition, viewing performance as a mechanism in the larger mechanism that is society invites the same questions I raised earlier on the issue of textualizing: a mechanism is a totality, and allusions to totality are ideological claims to power. Figuring out how the mechanism works equals figuring out how everything does. How would this conception of performance be modified by considering the possibility of recasting it in terms of the fully functioning parts of a 'Body without Organs' (Deleuze 1969; Deleuze and Guattari 1972)? Deleuze and Guattari pointed out how deeply anti-functional Artaud was in his writings,

⁹³ 'function, n.' OED (2014). [Online] Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/75476?rskey=q0bjWm&result=1&isAdvanced=false>. [Accessed 23/05/2014]

⁹⁴ The *phusis* (nature) / *nomos* (culture, but also convention) dichotomy is rooted in Greek thought (Loy 1995). That this dichotomy may apply elsewhere cannot be assumed without evidence, except by a hegemonic universalization.

whose view of Balinese performance was, as I argued in Chapter Four (cross-ref. 130), very different from that of any of his contemporaries or indeed of most of the scholars of Balinese performance that succeeded him. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the perfect functioning machine is that dreamed up by capitalism; how might a transformation of the mechanical metaphor for performance in Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of capitalism inform the study of Balinese performance? I shall attempt to explore this question in Chapter Seven.

Conclusion: Seeing and Speaking

Totalizations did have their uses in the history of scholarship, particularly in initiating a systematic dialogue with subject matter that lay beyond the limits of scholarly knowledge until then. Volosinov made the point clearly when he noted that to decipher a code one has to assume a system and a totality, but that this scarcely makes sense of living language, which can only be understood in dialogue: 'meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding' (1973: 102). So the arguments about theatre presented above prove problematic, as they textualize, domesticate, and universalize with an inherent bias in favour of a particular conception of the world that may or may not fit Balinese frames of reference. Totalizing theories of Balinese theatre articulate Balinese practices for them. Deleuze described Foucault's work in terms of the articulable and the visible, or statements and 'visibilities' (2006 [1986]). However, he clarified that 'visibilities are not forms of objects, nor even forms that would show up under light, but rather forms of luminosity which are created by the light itself and allow a thing or object to exist only as a flash, sparkle or shimmer' (Deleuze 2006 [1986]: 45). Even though visibilities are irreducible to statements, Deleuze argued that, in Foucault, the articulable has primacy over the visible (Deleuze 2006 [1986]: 57). How does the idea of expression fit this irreducibility and how might Deleuze's approach open up

possibilities that go beyond the established routes of expression and function in the study of Balinese practices?

The relationship between the seeable and the articulable becomes all the more crucial when one does not speak the language of the people one is studying (as is often the case [cross-ref. Chapter Four]), especially considering the emphasis placed on the visible, both literally (see Mead and Bateson, Krause, and so forth) and metaphorically (see Swellengrebel, Friederich, and so on) in representations of Bali. If there is ‘a difference in nature between seeing and speaking’ (Deleuze 2006 [1986]: 48), one is forced to examine both seeing and speaking in context, and as practices of power, knowledge, and mediation.

So, if ‘there is nothing prior to knowledge, because knowledge [...] is defined by the combinations of visible and articulable that are unique to each stratum or historical formation’ (Deleuze 2006 [1986]: 44), statements become ‘sayable only in relation to the conditions which make them so’ (Deleuze 2006 [1986]: 47). Under what conditions do Balinese performance practices become articulable? How do Balinese deal with this irreducibility when they put together, perform, watch, and talk about their own practices? Are they concerned with the functions of performance, or of performance as expressive? What other modes of engagement with performance might be possible? These questions can only be asked coherently in the present, during fieldwork, and so will form the framework through which I shall examine the various modes and contexts of performance that comprise Part Two.

Chapter Seven: Melestarikan Budaya Bali and Being a ‘Professional Balinese’⁹⁵

In the first part of the thesis, I reviewed the various frameworks within which Bali, Balinese culture and theatre/dance have been represented. The critical interrogation of the relevant approaches led to a series of questions pertaining to the purposes of knowledge on Bali, what theatre and dance do in contemporary Bali, and what counted as such in Bali in 2011-2012, according to whom, in what circumstances, with what purpose and outcomes. How does a shift from ‘theatre’ and ‘dance’ to ‘performance’ transform these questions?

In order to address the above, it is imperative to turn to a more detailed analysis of the different contexts in which ‘theatre,’ ‘dance,’ ‘performance,’ and related Indonesian and Balinese terms (all of which are ordinarily glossed as ‘theatre’) such as ‘*teater*,’ ‘*seni pertunjukan*,’ ‘*pementasan*’ (or, simply ‘*pentas*’), ‘*tari-tarian*,’ ‘*tontonan*,’ ‘*hiburan*,’⁹⁶ (B) ‘*igel-igelan*,’ and (A) ‘*sasolahan*,’ take place. When is each of these terms used, in what context, by whom, in what register, and in order to accomplish what?

Culture, Tradition, Creativity

In my discussions with Balinese theatre and dance students and experts, there were a series of terms that occurred consistently: *budaya* (culture), *adat* (tradition or custom), *tradisi* (tradition), *kreativitas* (creativity), *identitas* (identity). In this section, I shall examine some of the ways these are used in contemporary Bali, and consider the significance of the fact that none of these terms are Balinese.

⁹⁵ I owe this phrase to Kerry Negara’s documentary *Done Bali* (1993).

⁹⁶ *Hiburan*, usually translated as ‘entertainment’ (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2010), comes from the Malay *hibur*, ‘solace’; also *lipur*, ‘soothing,’ ‘to console’ (Wilkinson 1959).

When I asked Ayu, my Balinese language teacher⁹⁷ about the differences of watching performances in a temple compared to performances in a secular context, she said the following:

If I watch *sasolahan* at the temple, this is like a sacred [*sakral*] *sasolahan*, I am not noticing the *sasolahan* so much, whether it is bad, whether it is good, no. Because this *sasolahan*, which is sacred, is only a part of the ceremony. It is not entertainment [*hiburan*]. If the *sasolahan* is entertainment, I would focus more on assessing the movements, on whether I am entertained or not, in accordance with the purpose of that dance [*tarian*]. If it is a sacred *sasolahan*, the purpose [*tujuan/tetujon*] is not to be entertained. Because its purpose is for the ceremony, to complete the ceremony. If it is a *sasolahan* at the pavilion, that is entertainment. I watch, is it good or not this *sasolahan*, is it bad or not, because the purpose of this dance is to entertain us, therefore here we can comment, we can assess, am I already entertained or not? So, if the dance is at the pavilion we can surely focus more on seeing what the movement is like (Interview 25/02/2012).⁹⁸

What I find interesting here, apart from the critical stance towards secular performances and their purpose, is the consistent switch to Indonesian when Ayu talked about entertainment. Why did she choose to switch registers? And is she unusual in so doing? Do different registers point towards different contexts in which certain things (are made to) make sense? Is Indonesian more appropriate for talking about performance as entertainment, while Balinese more suited to less secular contexts? Is there a ‘natural’ pairing of Balinese vocabularies and modes of discourse with non-secular performance and of Indonesian with entertainment?

The distinction is not as clear-cut or straightforward as it might seem. ‘*Sakral*,’ the term Ayu used to describe performances that are necessary to complete a ceremony, is not only Indonesian, but a neologism, borrowed from Dutch (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2010).

⁹⁷ Gusti Ayu Eka Damayanthi is a young, high-caste student of Balinese linguistics from Batuan, Gianyar. She has studied dance at a local *sanggar* (studio), and has experience acting as an MC on various occasions. She also teaches elementary school, which makes her a *pegawai negeri* (civil servant).

⁹⁸ For the original, see Appendix A, note 7.1.

So why would a Dutch-derived neologism be necessary to talk about what appears to be deeply ‘Balinese’?

When I asked ISI students, as well as other people who, in one way or another, had to serve an official function (MCs, self-proclaimed experts, tourist guides), questions such as ‘why did you want to become a professional dancer’ and ‘what is the importance of theatre in Bali,’ the standard answer I was given was: ‘to preserve Balinese culture’ (*‘Melestarikan budaya Bali’*). In an interview with Hough, Bandem stated that the term *‘melestarikan’* appeared for the first time in 1969, during the first of Indonesia’s Five-Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun* or *Repelita* 1, 1969-1974), which was initiated by the New Order very soon after the new regime’s rise to power (Hough 2000: 267, interview 19/12/94). *‘Melestarikan’* then is a relatively new term that is intimately tied to a specific set of political and economic factors. How did it become so central to the way Balinese discuss their ‘culture’ today?

Interestingly, *‘budaya,’* the Indonesian equivalent of ‘culture,’ is also a neologism,⁹⁹ one that, in current usage, echoes the discourse of New Order:

the terms *budaya, kebudayaan, senibudaya* and other derivatives of the ‘culture-concept’ have played a central role in the New Order regime’s model of governance, as they have for Indonesian governments both past and present. In simple terms, *kebudayaan* is conceptualised in both national (*kebudayaan bangsa*) and regional (*kebudayaan daerah*) forms. The regional forms, that partially acknowledge Indonesia’s multicultural and heterogeneous composition, are most often *aestheticised* and represented material forms, as *senibudaya*. [...] It is clear that Indonesian discourse, particularly the hegemonic discourse of state policy, relies heavily on

⁹⁹ The origins of the term *‘budaya’* are rather obscure, and an accurate account of its genealogy would require further research. According to Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2010) the etymology is Sanskrit; however, there is no entry in Zoetmulder’s highly trustworthy *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (1982). In a personal communication (10/06/2014), Vickers speculated that this may be one of the Sanskritic neologisms created by Prijono (1907-1969; also spelled Priyono), Sukarno’s Minister of Education and Culture. Prijono was educated in Paris and Leiden in the study of medieval and Javanese texts, and ‘was chief adviser in the creation of a new set of terms based on the Sanskrit-influenced Old Javanese language’ (Vickers 2005: 146). He also established several institutions with the stated aim of reinforcing ‘national culture that was in tune with the revolutionary sentiment, introducing a new set of “folk dances” based on the activities of peasants and workers. Along with these invented “traditions”, Priyono’s ministry taught ideological songs which people who grew up in the era can still remember’ (Vickers 2005: 146-147).

appropriated and adapted versions of [...] English ‘culture-concept(s)’ (Noszlopy 2002: 85).

What is the significance of the use of neologisms, borrowed terms and concepts? While such usage is common in many languages, what are the implications for the discussion of theatre and dance in Bali? As mentioned in previous chapters, the appropriation and adaptation of foreign concepts that subsequently assume the status of inherent parts of ‘Balineseness’ can be found in the case of such ideas as *adat*, adopted from classical Arabic and loosely translated as tradition or custom. Why would a classical Arabic word be used to describe something that is fundamental to Balinese culture and society, if one believes the Leiden scholars and their treatment of *adat* as a—if not the—core concept in understanding Indonesia (cross-ref. 87)? Hans Schärer noted that ‘for mankind, there is no place free of *hadat* and no time without *hadat*’ (1963: 75). I do not wish to argue here about the semantic significance of loan words, or whether the use of a term can be equated with a determinate meaning, as meaning is itself vague and dependent upon use (cross-ref. 239-240). What I want to examine is whether the use of these loanwords is connected to a historically specific articulation of Balinese practices that has been developed and proliferated in a variety of media and contexts.

To what extent was tradition articulated as an object of study in order to satisfy a perceived lack, because, as Schärer’s statement above suggests, Western scholars thought everyone should have it? Besides, ‘tradition’ is a system or constellation of representations of practices, and so ‘invented’ by default. In this sense, to talk about ‘invented tradition’ is a tautology, and one that ignores the historical and political contexts of its articulation at any given time. So the point here is a double one. *Adat* is not just a much used term, but it is the articulatory term through which Balinese come to understand themselves. Further, they derive its usage partly from the Dutch (*adatrecht*; cross-ref. 87). The result is that Balinese have to understand themselves using a term that involves a double pre-articulation.

A Balinese expression that is used in a similar way to *adat*, and so can be translated as ‘tradition’ is *tata cara*,¹⁰⁰ which loosely translates as ‘the customary manner,’ literally ‘the order of the way or manner’ to do something (in the same way that *tata bahasa* refers to grammar, i.e. the order of language). For example, one can find publications on ‘*tata cara pernikahan Hindu*,’ for Hindu weddings, ‘*tata cara membakar mayat*’ or ‘*tata cara upacara kematian Hindu*’ for Hindu cremations and funerary rites, and so on. However, even though I regularly came across expressions such as *désa adat* (see Fox 2011: 121) or *pakaian adat* (Fox 2011: 118) referring to ‘traditional customs’ and ‘traditional attire’ respectively, I have not come across a use of either *adat* or *tata cara* in reference to performing arts. Indeed, I have never seen or heard the expression *tarian* (dance) *adat*, which would, presumably, refer to ‘traditional’ or ‘customary’ dances. The expression *tarian tradisional* or *seni tradisional* (traditional dance or traditional art) on the other hand, abounds, from tourist brochures, TV programmes, and commercial VCD and DVD recordings (Aneka Records, Maharani Records), to academic publications (Bandem and Rembang 1976), conference programmes and cultural festivals or showcases (e.g. Sanur Village Festival 2014). Both *adat* (which is perhaps more accurately translated as ‘customary’) and *tradisional* are regularly translated into English as ‘traditional.’ However, *tradisi* seems to refer to something different and to have a history and genealogy distinct from *adat*, one that is more intimately bound with tourism and the European search for authenticity in the East (cross-ref. 118) compared to the latter, which seems to be more closely connected to the Dutch fascination with the study of law and custom, and so the better governance, of their colonial subjects.

If we take ‘tradition’ as an articulation with a distinct and context-specific history, it may then be legitimate to question other, equally derivative, concepts, such as *kreativitas*. What do we refer to when we talk about creativity in contemporary Bali? What is creativity

¹⁰⁰ *Tata cara* is also used in Indonesian for ‘procedure’ (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2010).

and *seni budaya* (arts and culture) for? The theme of the 2013 Bali Arts Festival was '*Taksu: Membangkitkan Kreativitas dan Jati Diri*' or '*Taksu: Generating Creativity and Identity*,' which attempted to link creativity to Balinese identity, while deriving both from *taksu*. *Taksu*, usually glossed as spirituality or charisma, is a concept vague enough to fit both foreign practitioners' quest for the essence of Balinese performance (see J. Turner 2010) and considerably more practical Balinese approaches (see Dibia 2012b). How is creativity to be understood in the context of a curated and judged event like the Arts Festival, with directives imposed largely by the local (cross-ref. 262), and by extension, central government? Addressing a similar question, Hough has remarked: 'The impression I was left with throughout the period of fieldwork was that STSI, Bali seemed to be acting as the entertainment provider (*seksi kesenian*) for the government at the provincial and national level' (2000: 242). To what extent do the expectations and demands of the centre from the periphery and *vice versa* overlap or clash?

Hobart has argued that Balinese society instantiates Durkheim's idea of mechanical solidarity, in which groups, rather than personal networks, 'are central to social life and organize much of their members' activities, backed by formidable sanctions. Social integration comes through individual conformity, notably in religion and the arts' (2012: 7). In this context, originality and deviation from the norm, i.e. the potential features of a creative endeavour, are not only undesirable, but a danger to social cohesion and stability. 'So creativity becomes confined to endlessly elaborating accepted frameworks rather than potentially revolutionary exploration of the new' (Hobart 2012: 7). What, then, are arguably the endless variations of the same performances,¹⁰¹ created and overseen by the same (ISI-

¹⁰¹ I am referring here to the large numbers of new *Lègong Kreasi* that are delivered at the Arts Festival each year, where the only elements that change are the costumes and the brown, expendable bodies that wear them, or *Gong Kebyar* performances that are only differentiated from the year before by the amount of glitter and extravagance applied. Perhaps Goldenweiser's notion of 'involution' (1936) is relevant here; Goldenweiser used the notion to refer to Maori art and Gothic architecture, which consisted in endless variations within a rigid frame.

dominated) groups of people and accompanied by the identical and, to a foreign researcher, vacuous speeches (cross-ref. 262-264) delivered year after year for?

As my opening quote suggested (cross-ref. 195), there seem to be two broad registers in which Balinese discuss their performance-related practices: a Balinese one that simply does not address or concern itself with notions such as preservation, creativity, and so forth, because it tends to be practice-oriented, and a more modern, primarily Indonesian,¹⁰² state-sanctioned one that tends to focus on abstract essences. Balinese switch between or bridge the two, depending on context. However, because of the institutional apparatus (ISI, Arts Festival, schools, television, press) that reproduces the second one in multiple situations and contexts, this official register tends to be over-represented and much more accessible to a foreign researcher than the former. This is partly due to the fact that accessing and recognizing the practice-oriented register would require a level of linguistic fluency and personal and social familiarity with the subjects of study that is difficult to attain in the short period that is allocated for fieldwork in the current academic context in the UK. So, what does the unproblematic adoption of the terms examined above, which are derived from quite different contexts, and their subsequent promulgation as an explanation of Balineseness,

¹⁰² In the context of modern Indonesia, a contrast between Indonesian and Balinese registers may seem anachronistic. However, what is at issue here is not a simple switch between languages. I shall attempt to argue that these formulations, which I have chosen to call ‘registers,’ come with different concerns, different purposes, and different sets of assumptions. In other words, these are context-specific, rival articulations of what Bali and Balinese culture is, of who articulates Bali and Balinese practices as what, on what occasions, and so on. What I have been arguing in the first part of the thesis and what I argue in the following chapters is that there is no essence to an event that makes it either purely Indonesian or purely Balinese, or even hybrid, because the event includes its own representation *as* an event.

On a related note, wouldn’t the Indonesian terms *teater* and *drama* circumvent most of the problems I have raised regarding the lumping together of Balinese practices into taxonomic categories that have no Balinese equivalent, given that these terms have been in use by Indonesian (and so Balinese as well) critics and scholars, and taught in schools, for decades? Again, it depends on the context in which such terms are used. In its usage in Bali in 2011-12, *teater* did not refer to practices such as *Drama Gong*, *Topeng* etc., but only to modern, text-based performances (usually plays from the European canon) that adhere to the conventions of Western theatre. Similarly *drama* on its own was never used to refer to Balinese performance practices, and was, in my experience, rarely used in conversation in the first place. So there seems to be a sharp contrast between state-sanctioned and practice-related registers, which points in the direction of an antagonism, not only between different groups of people, but also between the different roles people assume in various circumstances.

imply? And what does ‘preserving Balinese culture’ mean, when its supposedly most important elements, and the very concept of ‘culture’ itself, are borrowed neologisms?

Instantiations of Balinese Culture

The Bali Arts Festival, where discussion regularly centres around terms such as creativity, tradition, Balinese culture or identity, was conceived precisely as an instantiation of Balinese culture, a ‘showcasing,’ ‘with the requisite involvement of both national, regional and district level government officials, and latterly, through two case studies that explore the relationship between artists, practitioners and bureaucrats and the official model of “culture” that they are obliged to display in the name of *senibudaya*’ (Noszlopy 2002: 89). As such, the Arts Festival presents a starkly essentialist and commoditized version of culture. This is further supported by the recent tendency to include more ‘*kebudayaan daerah*’ from different parts of Indonesia in the Arts Festival programme. This Linnaean taxonomy, with the distinction between a national genus (*kebudayaan bangsa*) and its provincial species, is classical in its essentialism.

At the same time, there is a tendency to ‘Balinize’ the New Order discourse, in a process similar to the Balinization of ‘*budaya*,’ ‘*adat*,’ and ‘*sakral*’ to the extent that they seem a *sine qua non* of discussions around Bali. An example can be found in the opening statement by Prof. Ida Bagus Oka¹⁰³ of *Pedoman Pasang Aksara Bali*, a book on Balinese language which is widely used in Bali:

If it is indeed like this that the state of a language is determined, and the literature and writing of Bali is increasingly becoming a luxury, it [this book] can result in the strengthening of Balinese culture that is also used to preserve and improve the culture of the nation, to be a hallmark of the development of national culture. I hope that starting from the book *Pedoman Pasang Aksara Bali* we will increase the

¹⁰³ Professor Ida Bagus Oka (1938-2010) served as the Rector of Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali. It may not be coincidental that he was the Governor of Bali from 1988 to 1993, and the Minister for Family Planning and Population Control during the Jusuf Habibie presidency.

effort to preserve and strengthen the language, literature, and writing of Bali (2002: vi).¹⁰⁴

In this passage, phrases such as '*melestarikan budaya Bali*' are translated into Balinese and presented as an integral part of the 'unity in diversity' of national culture. And, as we saw earlier, the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, Unity in Diversity, just like its point of origin, the *Sutasoma*, is hardly descriptive; it articulates and promotes the interests of specific groups of people with a stake in maintaining the appearance of the unity of a tamely diverse Indonesia (cross-ref. 160).

The Bali Arts Festival started out as an event organized by Balinese for Balinese (Hough 2000), but was then co-opted by the government, with the President's appearance for the opening of the Festival becoming mandatory in recent years. The Arts Festival has contributed to theatre becoming indissoluble from Balinese branding of itself internationally. It is also supposed to encompass the entire breadth, but only what is deemed the best, of Balinese art, with a strong focus on performance. However, as Laclau has unwrapped any claim to totality from its ideological pretensions and proposed that it is better understood as an articulatory practice, the Arts Festival's declaration of showcasing the entirety of Balinese culture begs the question: what does it leave out? Foucault argued that

[s]ilence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse [...] than an element that functions alongside the things said [...]. [W]e must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses (1978: 27).

So who is authorized and who is disenfranchised in this case? Who profits? For whom is this event? What is silenced? And what is its significance of such omissions and silences?

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix A, note 7.2.

Events like the Arts Festival, or district-level celebrations, such as a Regency-funded *Sendratari Kolosal*,¹⁰⁵ titled ‘Kala Durga Kalangon’ (19/04/2012) and featuring local hero Kebo Iwa, given for the celebration of the ‘birthday’ of Gianyar (which was also televised by DewataTV), are well attended by officials, academics, and professional performers, as well as local families and merchants. Before such performances begin, the MC usually reads a list of guidelines for the audience, advising them not to go near the stage, not get on the stage, and not to make loud noises or point laser beams at the stage. What sort of status is allocated to audiences at such events?

Dibia, in his capacity as an actor and teacher, stated that audiences need to be ‘driven’ by the actors, rather than the other way around. In fact, he often described audiences as children to be taught, or protected. This became quite obvious in an interview where Dibia discussed the reasons for censorship in televised performances:

Because of the law of pornography. The other thing is that that’s the function of television as a public medium where some things should not be included. Just this morning I was giving my short statement for the anniversary of BaliTV. As a public medium owned by the government, TV is trying to control their programmes in order not to let the programme be contaminated by morally low kind of programmes, because, other than giving info and entertaining, television also has the function of educating. Especially now it’s more important because our nation now is very concerned with character building (Interview 04/08/2012).¹⁰⁶

It seems, then, that audiences (*penonton*) exist largely in the gerundive: they are there to be admonished and checked, like children. There is an interesting parallel here with what Hartley called television’s ‘paedocratic regime’: ‘The institutional needs and purposes of the television industry are survival and profitability, to be achieved (hopefully) by audience maximization and by minimizing risks and uncertainties. Audiences are *paedocratized* to

¹⁰⁵ *Sendratari* is a ‘form of pantomimed dance-drama [which] started in the 1960s and [is] still very popular among Balinese today’ (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 108). It usually involves a large number of performers who silently enact as if they were puppets controlled by the *dalang* (puppet master). *Sendratari Kolosal* is a large-scale performance that usually involves elaborate costumes, constructions, and special effects.

¹⁰⁶ This discussion took place in English, at Dibia’s insistence.

serve these needs. [...] The audience is imagined as having childlike qualities and attributes' (1992: 108).

Dibia's concerns about safeguarding audiences were shared by the Arts Festival organizational committee (of which Dibia is a long-standing member), who warned *Joged Bumbung*¹⁰⁷ performers about moderating the sexual aspects of their dances for the context of the festival in order to 'protect audiences' (Dibia, interview 04/08/2012). There is, in other words, a strong sense of closure surrounding these 'culture-prescribing' events, and these are in direct correlation to character-building on a national, centrally-prescribed level. However, this says very little about what Balinese audiences actually do with these performances. Besides, '[a]rguments about culture are cultural. And in what it seeks to exclude and suppress, culture hints at its own "constitutive outside," that which refuses to be tamed, rational, coherent, productive' (Hobart 2000: 15). Does, then, a pronounced tendency to control audiences automatically mean that audiences are controlled?

Controlling Audiences?

In addressing the question of the correspondence between a centrally-determined purpose or intention behind 'culture-prescribing' events and the way audiences engage with them, Noszlopy suggested that such correspondence should not be unproblematically assumed:

While the PKB immediately appears as a prime example of a 'showcase of culture' and an officiated 'ritual of state' (*upacara nasional*), one cannot assume that the version of *senibudaya* presented in this mediated form is received, articulated, and left uncritiqued by the Balinese 'audience.' The political 'message' sent out by the government is not merely 'received', and passively 'read', by the people (*masyarakat*), who either participate in it directly, or watch it on the streets, or on television. Rather, there is a complex

¹⁰⁷ *Joged Bumbung* is a dance involving a female dancer who invites a partner (men, women, children) from the people in attendance to dance with her. It is flirtatious and can be highly sexualized. At the 2011 and 2012 Bali Arts Festival, there were groups of *Joged* enthusiasts who attended and participated in a large number of performances and came prepared with masks, fans, and phallus-shaped props.

interplay of political allusion, cultural representation and a variety of local responses, ranging through enthusiasm, criticism, apathy and ambivalence (2002: 89).

Let me use as an example another *Sendratari* performance, titled '*Lahirnya Gajah Mada*' ('Gajah Mada's Birth'), performed by Sanggar¹⁰⁸ Bona Alit and broadcast on TVRI as part of its *Tetaring* programme.¹⁰⁹ Sanggar Bona Alit was founded by I Gusti Ngurah Adi Putra (alias Agung Alit) in 1996. Agung Alit is the son of dancer and choreographer I Gusti Gede Rai, '[a] personal favorite of Indonesia's First [sic] President Suharto' (Bona Alit 2009-2013).

The performance began with Gajah Mada's early years, arriving at a recounting of his conquest of the different areas that formed the Majapahit Empire. This was accompanied by dancing and music in the style of each area Gajah Mada conquered. The performance culminated with Gajah Mada's near-completion of his task to unify the archipelago, and the following statement, in Bahasa Indonesia, amidst waving Indonesian flags: 'The awakening of the soul of the archipelago will presently take place and it will start from Bali. Because Bali is the last heir of the soul of the archipelago.'¹¹⁰ The performance ended with a triumphant '*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*,' the connotations of which have already been explored earlier (cross-ref. 160, 202). There is much dissimulation here of the fact that Balinese are still largely distrusted, as they sided mostly with the Dutch during the war for the Independence of Indonesia and were among the most ardent supporters of the New Order.

¹⁰⁸ A *sanggar* is a music and/or dance studio that can also perform as a group.

¹⁰⁹ *Tetaring*, according to TVRI producer Mukas Suarsana, is 'an entertainment programme that shows traditional theatre or drama (*Drama Gong*, *Arja*, and other forms of traditional theatre)' (Personal communication 21/07/2014). '*Tetaring*' literally means woven coconut leaves (see Appendix B, Figure 1), a material which is used as a temporary roof or shade on a variety of occasions. The name of the programme references the use of *tetaring* in many performance areas.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix A, note 7.3. Also, this echoes the *Usana Jawa* (an account of the subjugation of Bali to the kingdom of Majapahit in 1343) where the first Indian Brahmana arrived in Java and knelt before Semar, whom he acknowledged as the soul of the Javanese. Semar (Figure 2) often appears in Javanese *Wayang* as one of the *punakawan* characters (commoners, servants, social critics). That *punakawan*—and *panasar*, their counterparts in Balinese genres such as *Topèng* or *Drama Gong*—are consistently translated and treated as 'clowns' in many studies (Dibia 2004: 64) is even more problematic if we consider Semar's divine status.

There is also a clearly nationalistic agenda that makes this performance fit for broadcast on national television. It was spectacular and didactic. But what did its audiences do with it?

Here I can only address the issue of how audiences engaged with the performance by reference to an example, being fully aware of the limitations of extending it to apply to Balinese more generally. I watched a recording of this performance with a family of four in Bona, Gianyar. During the performance, the parents used what they saw as a starting point to teach their children about Indonesian history. Gèk, the mother, told me: ‘I like this. [...] The story, the history. This is also received by the children, yes? A lesson. Like earlier, Kadèk [their son] asked “Oh, who is this, Gajah Mada’s mother?” [...] I also didn’t know this history from the beginning. And the story was fast, yes? It didn’t take long’ (Gèk, Bona, Discussion 23/05/2012).¹¹¹ They paid particular attention, however, not to Gajah Mada or the unity of Indonesia, but to Kebo Iwa, the local hero who opposed Gajah Mada and defended Bali, which is the more interesting as he was not portrayed in this particular performance at all.

So here it becomes evident that these spectators were dealing with shared knowledge which they brought to the performances we watched. Perhaps, then, performances in Bali may be better understood as articulations of events (real or imagined) that most people would have some knowledge of. The family also focused on Kebo Iwa’s *sakti* and explained that, although Gajah Mada was also a person with *sakti* that matched Kebo Iwa’s, it was by trickery (*‘dibunuh dengan ditipu’*) that the Javanese finally prevailed.¹¹² They also commented on the flags in the end: ‘Oh, the red-white. That is Indonesia. But earlier at the time of Majapahit, the white colour was on top. The red was at the bottom. It had a different

¹¹¹ See Appendix A, note 7.4.

¹¹² Margaret Wiener, in her nuanced analysis of Balinese accounts of colonial conquest, stated that most Balinese know Kebo Iwa’s tale and attributed his defeat to Gajah Mada’s treachery (1995: 302-303). This story also mirrors the fall of Bédaulu, another Balinese king who was also tricked and defeated by Gajah Mada (see Wiener 1995: 102-105).

meaning’ (Bona, Discussion 23/05/2012).¹¹³ In this, they recognized the glaring nationalism of the anachronistic spin that was put on the story.

What emerges from this discussion is that even a programme with such a tightly articulated nationalist ‘message,’ and what tighter articulation than one performed by a single puppet master (*dalang*) as is the case in *Sendratari*, can be used in unexpected ways. Pre-articulation does not equal pre-acceptance. An articulation that initially sounded so static that it would be reasonable to assume it attempted an ideological closure and claim to totality was complicated by what people actually said and did with it. However, it is crucial here that, as argued in Part One, neither the political nor the intellectual élite think that this is a topic worth discussing, let alone researching. And if they did, the difficulty, as I shall argue in Chapter Nine, is that the discursive constraints are so formidable and repeated in so many media that it may be hard, but not impossible (cross-ref. 269-270), for Balinese in certain positions not to use concepts and methods that would produce desired readings.

One feature of the discursive closure is that it minimizes the possibility of epistemological surprises. Besides, in order for the major models to work, one has to deal not with subjects, but with an undifferentiated mass. And ‘[the masses] don’t express themselves, they are surveyed. They don’t reflect upon themselves, they are tested. [...] Now polls, tests, the referendum, media are devices which no longer belong to a dimension of representations, but to one of simulation. They no longer have a referent in view, but a model’ (Baudrillard 2007: 48). So it is a challenge for the researcher to spend enough time in Bali and in situations that would allow one to spot and examine the sutures and incoherences in this (professional, political, and institutional) articulation of Bali, and for ‘professional Balinese’ to slip into roles other than the familiar ones of local expert or well-informed informant when engaging with the researcher.

¹¹³ See Appendix A, note 7.5.

Returning to the discussion about the performance with the family in Bona, I later found out that the interest in Kebo Iwa was sparked by ‘Kala Durga Kalangon,’ the *Sendratari Kolosal* performance in Gianyar that I mentioned earlier, which had taken place the previous month and the family had attended. Ni Madé Wiratini, a dancer and teacher at ISI, and Dibia’s wife, dismissed this performance as ‘just spectacle’ and ‘only entertainment’ (Personal communication, 20/04/2012). However, as witnessed by the use this family made of the performance, and as Inden has remarked in relation to Hindi films (2013), entertainment is not necessarily antithetical to information, and spectacle is not antithetical to narrative. What is at issue in this contradiction?

Commoditization, Kitsch, Capitalism

The ‘Kala Durga Kalangon’ performance was art-directed, and part of it was choreographed, by I Madé Sidia, currently one of the best-known puppeteers and choreographers in Bali, whose *sanggar* is based in Bona. The performance was repeated in smaller scale at the anniversary of Sidia’s *sanggar*, in a programme that included a pop singer and a children’s *kecak*.¹¹⁴ The same performance was later repeated, and again recorded by DewataTV, as part of the Nusa Dua Fiesta, organized by the association of resorts in Nusa Dua.¹¹⁵ The festival included body painting, the *luwuk* dance of Sulawesi, Indonesian cooking, an underwater photo exhibition, *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppetry) and ‘dances of the Archipelago.’

There are some interesting parallels here between this seemingly haphazard pastiche of dances and the significance attributed to them and Baudrillard’s idea of kitsch: ‘This proliferation of kitsch, which is produced by industrial reproduction and the vulgarization at

¹¹⁴ *Kecak* is usually performed by male dancers, sometimes referred to as a chorus (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 107). The first performance of *kecak* in its modern version took place in Bedulu in 1930, choreographed by I Wayan Limbak and Walter Spies (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 104).

¹¹⁵ Nusa Dua is a peninsula in southern Bali, but the name can also refer to a purpose-built enclave of luxury hotels and resorts situated at the southeast side of the peninsula.

the level of objects of distinctive signs taken from all registers (the bygone, the “neo”, the exotic, the folksy, the futuristic) and from a disordered excess of “ready-made” signs, has its basis, like “mass culture”, in the sociological reality of the consumer society’ (1998: 110).

What does it mean that the same performance can be used for the promotion of Gianyar (by showcasing its signature product, performance, and its local Balinese hero, Kebo Iwa), the self-promotion of an artist, in a potpourri with pop songs, and for the promotion of Balinese tourism? What is it that allows such variety of ‘cultural artefacts’ to be apparently seamlessly incorporated in all these different contexts? And would it make a difference if the *Sendratari* were replaced by a *Kebyar*¹¹⁶ or a *Wayang Kulit*, or, indeed, by a demonstration of Balinese cooking accompanied by *Lègong* dancers, since all of the above are ‘cultural’?

In this sense, re-imagining anything as ‘culture’ is what enables its exchangeability and, subsequently, its transactability. But exchangeability and the dissolution of differences is one of the major characteristics of capitalism as described by Deleuze and Guattari: ‘So many reasons for defining capitalism by a social axiomatic that stands opposed to codes in every respect. First of all, money as a general equivalent represents an abstract quantity that is indifferent to the qualified nature of the flows’ (1972: 269-270). The point is that everything needs to be decoded, interchangeable, in order to flow together as capital. Capitalism is dependent on a ‘transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 109). As such, it ‘continually axiomatizes other qualitatively dissimilar resource-flows, transforming them into quantitatively exchangeable commodities on the market’ (Holland 1999: 67). Balinese arts, culture and spirituality are streamlined and reproduced, their abundance directly analogous to the presence of tourists, in a process that mirrors Adorno and Horkheimer’s (1993 [1972]) or Benjamin’s (1977) portrayals of art in the

¹¹⁶ *Kebyar* is a style of music and dance that originated in North Bali in 1915 (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 107).

age of mechanical reproduction.¹¹⁷ Quite ironically, if, as Baudrillard argued, the basic commodity of consumer society is not a positive object or product, but the promise of access to difference (1968: 22; 1998: 74-75), it is the dissolution of differences between Balinese practices that transform them into difference-as-product. *Budaya*, *kreativitas*, *adat*, and even the *sakral* and the associated term for religion, *agama*, are all made to merge together as capital, becoming ‘part of a representational régime which produces hypostatized entities out of living practices’ (Hobart 2012: 10). But who are the people whose practices are at once abstracted and hypostatized, and who is involved in this process?

Antagonism and Cynicism

Several groups of people have been involved, under various circumstances and with different purposes, in reducing Balinese performance-related practices to the abstract entities explored above. On the one hand, there are the foreign researchers whose work I scrutinized in Part One of the thesis: in a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, Balinese dance came forth to satisfy the expectation of European colonialists and tourists for dancing natives (cross-ref. 134; Hobart 2007: 109), while Barba’s constructed *ad hoc* situations (cross-ref. 142) have grown into the normal mode of engagement between Balinese and foreign practitioners. On the other hand, there are the nationally- and internationally-trained Balinese academics and practitioners who, in their academic and official capacities often conjure theatrical models that echo those presented in Part One or are assigned the role of enunciators of Balinese culture on behalf of regional and national governments.

¹¹⁷ A note on tourist performances might be relevant here: Hobart noted that ‘[n]o one is sure, but tourist dances probably account for well over 90% of performances, except perhaps on a few festival days. The musicians and dancers are shipped not in buses, but packed together in the back of trucks that are used otherwise to transport cattle and merchandise. Balinese dance epitomises the brute commoditisation of labour’ (2007: 116). In addition, in 2011-2012, dancers were paid a minimal amount of approximately Rp 14,000, when the price of admission was Rp 50,000-100,000 per person.

However, these same people work in quite different ways when they perform, in effect bringing to the fore a discrepancy between practices of enunciating (bureaucratese or academic registers) and the practices of getting a performance to work for an audience. For instance, Ketut Kodi (cross-ref. 168-170) has very different concerns when in the role of academic and teacher than in the role of actor. When he discussed a *Topèng Pajegan* performance with me, his focus was on the purposes that the performance fulfilled in its specific context. In other words, he emphasized what the performance was *for*, as well as the practices through which it fulfilled them and the ways his spectators engaged with it (cross-ref. 232-235), rather than the community- and nation-building elements that he discussed in his thesis as being of tantamount importance in discussions of Balinese performance. Similarly, Dibia rarely discusses creativity, identity or community in rehearsal, when he is more concerned with technique, atmosphere (*suasana*), impact, and clarity of form (Fieldwork notes from a *Gong Kebyar* rehearsal in Bulèlèng, 28/08/2011). The vocabulary of *kreativitas*, *identitas* and so forth, by contrast, is reserved for situations when Dibia is called to comment as a master enunciator of Balinese performance rather than as a practitioner (cross-ref. 264-268). In addition, as I have pointed out earlier, these European-derived terms are all in Indonesian, which is also the teaching and publishing language of ISI. So there is a disproportion between the ways Balinese go about and comment on their practices and the ways in which some Balinese in key roles articulate them formally and mediate them to other Balinese, Indonesians, and the rest of the world, to the extent that the latter overwrite the former. Why is this significant? What purposes does each of these separate registers serve?

The crucial feature of this discrepancy, or even conflict, between different roles is that the people who undertake the production of the ‘hypostatized entities’ mentioned above are the same ones whose practices are being abstracted. This creates an antagonism, an impossible situation in which Balinese are called to occupy very strange subject positions,

being at the same time the enunciators of claims to an imaginary totality of Balinese culture, and the subjects of some of the practices that are articulated, reduced, and sanitized to submission.

When presenting themselves to non-Balinese, from guided tours that include tooth-filings, cremations and trance dances, to large-scale spectacles such as the *Bali Agung* show,¹¹⁸ Balinese ‘are dissolving the differences between, or decoding, what was previously kept distinct’ (Hobart 2012: 10). The *Bali Agung* show, is of particular interest: as part of the Bali Safari & Marine Park (admission fees making it unattainable for the vast majority of Balinese), and by virtue of being performed mainly in English, *Bali Agung* is clearly marketed at an international audience. It also effectively summarizes Balinese culture to the extent of rendering Bali—and Balinese themselves, because ‘the masses are as “indeterminate” as capital itself’ (Baudrillard 2007: 26)—obsolete. Capitalist equivalence eradicates difference and generates indeterminacy, while Balinese and their practices are relegated to irrelevance or become impossible to articulate in sanctioned terms.

How total is the dissolution of differences when it comes to performance in contemporary Bali? Arguably, this endless paedocratizing would not be necessary if performances and audiences actually did what they are represented as doing. So what other modes of engagement with Balinese practices are there? Lotringer, Kraus and El Kholti, in the introduction to Baudrillard’s *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, defined cynicism as ‘the ability to grasp the code without nursing any illusion and recognize for what it is the particular context in which one operates’ (2007: 27). To what degree and in what contexts

¹¹⁸ Art-directed by I Madé Sidia, *Bali Agung* takes place at the Bali Theatre, a ‘mega-stage theatrical complex with a 1200 seating capacity. It is fully equipped with advanced multi-media technology and state-of-art sound and lighting systems.’ It is located in the Bali Safari & Marine Park, which can be found ‘on the newly developed seaside highway, Jalan Ida Bagus Mantra, assuring visitors an easy and fast access from the main tourist destinations of Kuta, Nusa Dua or Sanur as well as from the island’s eastern and central tourist areas of Karangasem and Ubud’ (Bali Safari & Marine Park 2011). It opened in August 2010, and is currently still running.

might ‘professional Balinese’ be cynical in this sense? If capitalism¹¹⁹ is only one of the contexts that Balinese have to negotiate today, what other considerations (political, social, religious) might there be, and how do Balinese articulate them (or avoid to) and cope with them in different contexts?

In this chapter, I began to address the complexities of the *discours* around performance-related practices in contemporary Bali, touching on the issues of culture, tradition, and creativity. I attempted to examine these in terms of the power relations that determine their articulation, and the antagonisms involved in the commoditization of large-scale performance for both domestic and international audiences. However, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, Balinese performance is not restricted to organized platforms like the Bali Arts Festival and government- or regency-funded spectacles. There is a wealth of performances outside of these tightly-controlled events, particularly on occasions the success of which depends on the definitive separation between different codes and performance practices. To go back to the discussion of terms that prompted this chapter, Balinese do not often use the Balinese verb (*ngigel*) for someone dancing at the Arts Festival; they use the Indonesian *menari*. What kinds of events are terms like the (A) *masolah* (and the derivative noun *sasolahan*) or (B) *ngigel* (and the noun *igel-igelan*) reserved for, and how do they sit alongside everything else?

¹¹⁹ Capitalism perforce remains a problematic term, the analysis of which would involve me in further discussion of Deleuze and Guattari which would go beyond the scope and purposes of this thesis.

Chapter Eight: Contexts of Performance

One of the questions that sparked this thesis was: do Balinese have theatre? Part One explored the epistemological pitfalls and hegemonic implications of representing Balinese practices *as* theatre. In Part Two, the focus shifted to what these practices are for and what is involved in approaching them once one has moved past the apparent academic insistence on studying them as theatre. In the previous chapter, I explored large-scale performances in a secular context, such as the Bali Arts Festival (PKB), and the attendant notions of culture, tradition, and creativity. In this chapter, I shall turn my attention to contexts of performances in the discussion of which terms such as *ngigel* or *masolah* are often preferred as against the Indonesian equivalent (*menari*). What are such performances for? What are people concerned with when performing, watching, or discussing them?

Watching

I would like to begin this chapter somewhat performatively, using my fieldwork notes from 7 September, 2011:¹²⁰

Today I went to a *Topèng Pajegan* [solo masked performance]¹²¹ in Singapadu, Gianyar, in the context of a cremation ceremony at *banjar* [ward] Sengguan [Wayan Dibia's village and ward]. I put on my *pakaian adat* [ceremonial outfit] for the first time—my landlady had to help me to wear it correctly. At first it was very awkward, I was put in the middle of an empty pavilion and only some men came and talked to me. Then, one of the women whose husband was being cremated came to meet me. She told me her husband died a year and two months ago. I introduced myself, and told her what I was doing there. I asked where I should sit so I didn't disturb them, and she

¹²⁰ I have paraphrased words that would be unclear to the reader otherwise.

¹²¹ A *Topèng Pajegan* usually (with greater and greater consistency) starts with two introductory dances (*panglembar*), in which the performer first dons a *topèng keras* (the mask of a courtly minister in his prime) and then the *topèng tua* (an old man). These dances usually have no connection to the story performed subsequently, which starts when the performer dons the mask of a *panasar* (commonly rendered as 'clown' or 'clown servant'), who delivers an introductory monologue (*pamahbah*), and also is more likely to include jokes and criticisms about current issues. Other characters may include ministers and kings.

pointed to where a bunch of women were sitting. I moved. Soon I was sitting in a small crowd with no elbow or knee space.

After waiting for a couple of hours, I Ketut Kodi, the actor, and his assistant appeared and, after sitting around talking to a couple of men, everything was ready. As the ceremony started in earnest I was amazed by how much was going on at the same time. There was the *Topèng Pajegan* with a gamelan, *Wayang Lemah* [a kind of shadow puppetry without a screen, performed only on, or as part of, ritual occasions like cremations and birthdays] with its own instruments, someone giving directions on a microphone, and elaborate offerings, all at the same time. Nobody seemed to pay attention to the introductory *Topèng* dances, and most of the people had their backs turned to Kodi. The *Wayang Lemah* was only watched by a young boy (and, occasionally, my camera). When the *Topèng* performance came to the final *panasar*, a commoner who talked and joked about one's journey after death, everything else more or less settled down, the gamelan stopped, so did the *Wayang*, and then the actor was clearly addressing the people there. At one point, I noticed the women next to me drying away tears. And then the tone changed slightly, and there was laughter mixed with the tears. Not everyone was paying attention, though; many people were still chatting among themselves or making offerings (*ngaé banten*). Others had their backs turned to Kodi, but occasionally laughed at his jokes. There were prayers, ducks, chicks (to be sacrificed) and other offerings were moved from one place to another, and suddenly one of the women sitting in front of me started singing.¹²² Soon they were all singing (Fieldwork notes 07/09/2011).

The first question that arises from this extract is: If only some people are watching some of the time, and some of the time no one is watching, in what sense is Kodi's performance 'theatre'? Even if we take Western conceptions of theatre as a yardstick, and consider theatre as that which happens between an actor and a spectator (Brook 1968: 11, 154; Grotowski 1968: 19), this is not theatre in any obvious sense. Nor is it the reading of a text. So how are we to characterize it? Could it be, for instance, the instantiation of a theme or the development of a narrative? I shall explore these possibilities later in this chapter. For now, however, it is obvious that Kodi's *Topèng* does not fit comfortably the usual definitions of theatre.

¹²² I later found out that what I initially understood as 'singing' was in fact the performance of *kidung*, a kind of Balinese metrical poetry (for more information see Vickers 1982; Creese 2000; Fox 2011: 153-155). Reading, performing, and explicating *kidung* in local groups, but also on live television and radio programmes has gained popularity in Bali in recent years (see Putra 2009).

As almost all, if not all, Balinese spectators were evidently not paying attention to what happened as theatre in the sense that a European researcher or theatregoer would reasonably expect, perhaps it would be useful to stop asking whether a *Topèng Pajegan* is theatre, or in what ways it may be considered as such. One possible answer to why almost nobody seemed interested in the introductory dances of the *Topèng Pajegan* would be that this performance was simply not for them. Human beings were not the intended audience; it was *niskala* (the ‘unmanifest’ audience of spirits and deities) that were the primary addressees in this instance. Ironically, however, these introductory parts are the ones beloved and most documented by foreign enthusiasts, as they tend to judge them aesthetically (and these parts also lack the linguistic barrier of the rest of the performance).

In a related discussion about audiences,¹²³ Wayan Dibia remarked that Balinese audiences are ‘not as attentive as Western audiences.’¹²⁴ They are more relaxed; not just watching, they are experiencing the entire thing, not just watching what’s happening on stage’ (Interview 04/08/2012). That is because they are merely the visible, human audience of the performance. ‘At least in the mind of Balinese audience, they are watching with an invisible audience, especially in the context of temple festivals. And every actor-dancer starts with “oh, I am so happy to be part of this. It is a great honour to perform in front of [this invisible audience].” It is very important that the actor acknowledges this invisible audience’ (Dibia, interview 04/08/2012).¹²⁵

At the Arts Festival, on the other hand, such distinctions are not as obvious. However, even though performances at the Arts Festival are primarily watched by a human audience, *niskala* audiences are still part of what is happening, only, according to Dibia, at different percentages:

¹²³ As I mentioned earlier, the discussion on 04/08/2012 took place in English, at Dibia’s insistence.

¹²⁴ Here Dibia was reiterating the infamous ‘flickering attention’ pattern generally attributed to Indonesian audiences by a previous generation of writers (see Peacock 1968).

¹²⁵ This, of course, is Dibia’s interpretation or rationalization and not necessarily the reasons Balinese actors and audiences do what they do.

At the PKB, only a 30% of the performance is addressed to the *niskala* audience, whereas at a temple ceremony (*odalan*), the percentage is at 60% [for the invisible audience] and 40% [for the human audience], because at the *odalan* everyone comes to the ceremony in that kind of mind. ‘I am going to attend the ceremony while watching.’ They are not going there to watch a performance. The performers also: ‘I am going to perform there to *ngayah* [to offer a social or religious service].’ They may still receive money, but they’re also dedicating their performance to please the god residing inside the temple. As for a performance at PKB, they might invite the deity to watch the performance, but the largest percentage of the performance is for the human audience, the visible audience (Interview 4/08/2012).

But what is involved in this idea of ‘watching a performance,’ when this is evidently not, or not primarily, what people did at the cremation ceremony in Singapadu? Even more so, what does it mean that a performance is addressed to or watched by *niskala*?

On the one hand, context becomes important in attempting to approach these questions. The context is different, as one is a religious occasion and the other is not; so the status of performance is concomitantly different. If the performance is the primary reason for attending, then it is hardly surprising that it is foregrounded and not backgrounded. In addition, performers adjust their performances according to the context and the intended audience. For instance, according to Dibia, at a *Topèng Pajegan* a performer is likely to avoid dirty jokes, ‘because there are priests and sacred objects there’ (Interview 04/08/2012). There is an interesting similarity here between this self-adjustment to context and a kind of censorship that happens to performances when they are televised: offensive elements are removed for the sake of the television audience, this time by the producers. Perhaps this would allow us to conceive of television audiences as a new kind of *niskala*. The theorization about them is as dependent on representations and articulations as the invisible audiences of Balinese temple ceremonies. Besides, *niskala* is the non-manifest. Television audiences could, in this sense, be considered *niskala*, as they are not manifest to the actors.

Interestingly, there is an additional parallel between *niskala* and television audiences that might also be able to account for the difficulty in disentangling the issues of whom the performance addresses, whom it is watched by, what watching entails, and whether paying attention is a requirement. On several occasions, the verb used by my Balinese interlocutors for *niskala* watching the performance was not *nonton*, as it was for the people present, but *menyaksikan* or *nyaksinin*, which can be translated as ‘to witness.’ Television presenters and programmes (and so producers) invited audiences to *menyaksikan/saksikan/nyaksinin* televised events (such as concerts, political speeches and debates, or ceremonial openings) that are broadcast live. Bearing witness is a very important role in Balinese society. For instance, the presence of a particular Cokorda (king) at the reading of a dynastic chronicle (*babad*) may be required as an acknowledgement and confirmation of a public work (see Hobart 1990). Similarly, ceremonies and other formal events need to be witnessed by *niskala* in order for them to have the proper status of being publicly recognized as having happened. However, the point is that *nyaksinin* requires that whoever is to witness should be present, able to confirm that the event took place; but whether *niskala*, or television audiences, for that matter, are paying attention or what that would entail is largely unknown, or even unknowable, if meaningful at all.

In a discussion with Mangku Wali, a low-caste temple priest, in Bona, Gianyar, his depiction of *niskala* was quite different: the unmanifest worlds present at temple ceremonies are not audiences at all; they are the ones performing. This is the reason why, according to Mangku Wali, temple performances, like *Calonarang*, a genre often televised by DewataTV, should not be recorded and broadcast on television, to which he saw no point except commercialization. I offered the idea of competition between communities as a possible

explanation; people want to enhance their village's reputation.¹²⁶ To this Mangku Wali responded as follows: 'Dancers like Madé Sidia can go to other places to perform, but the *palinggih* [the deities residing there] of the temple cannot, so what is the point?' (Interview 19/05/2012). In Mangku Wali's view, when a dancer is performing at the temple, it is really the deity that is dancing. The *niskala* as audience does not enter into the discussion at all; *niskala* is, rather, the principal performer(s), using humans as vehicles through which to dance. It does not matter whether or not the humans dance well in an aesthetic sense, as Ayu also remarked earlier (cross-ref. 195). Ni Madé Pujawati, a professional Balinese dancer, agreed: 'That is why it does not matter choosing people who cannot dance, because the Gods dance for them. That is why they can perform dances that they do not know well' (Personal communication 15/12/2013).

In this discussion, 'audiences' do not feature at all. So how and when does 'audience' play any role in the first place? How can *Topèng Pajegan* have an 'audience,' unless it is theatre? If the concept of 'audiences' is important in Bali, is it significant that there is no Balinese word for it? And if neither what might be called 'audiencing' (see McAuley and Ginters 2010) nor acting is the principal issue, what is?

After Theatre?

In my fifteen-month research in Bali in 2011-2012, I did not come across an invocation of the audience in Balinese performance-related practices in any meaningful way, with three exceptions: First, when I brought it into the discussion, directly or indirectly, which says much about the extent to which research can be made to conform with pre-existing narratives; second, in broadcast situations (news and other television programmes), which

¹²⁶ This explanation was often given to me by television producers. This also explains why it is the organizers of the performance who pay DewataTV and BaliTV to televise such events, rather than the other way around (Sutawan, DewataTV, Interview, 23/07/2012). TVRI, however, does not accept money from local communities, as it is subsidized by the Indonesian state.

have clearly migrated from imported models; and, finally, in highly formal contexts such as the Bali Arts Festival, where the platform is arguably derivative from the early State Radio (Radio Republic Indonesia, or RRI) and National Television (TVRI) modes of presentation. In the 2012 Arts Festival, incidentally, MCs tended to lump together both live and broadcast audiences, as many of the performances were broadcast live on the cultural programme of RRI Denpasar.

In other words, unless one abides by a European idea of theatre, of which ‘the audience’ is a constituent, researching ‘the audience’ in Bali, where no one word exists to describe the concept, does not make any sense at all. By maintaining the concept of ‘the audience,’ I kept trapping myself within the familiar, European idea of theatre. This, does not mean that there is not a whole range of questions that pertain to ideas of spectatorship in Balinese performance. However, the important issue is that these focus on practices and commentary (by, about, and for ‘the audience’) and can help examine the various ways that Balinese understand their performance practices. It is not about understanding what one of the two constitutive groups of theatre does, or how it fits within a structure that we can label ‘Balinese theatre,’ but rather about exploring the whole range of practices that one can stumble upon when dealing with performance in Bali. It is about shifting the focus to the purposes, contexts and situations of performance, to a number of Balinese understandings of themselves in practice, namely how Balinese set about understanding ‘theatre,’ and themselves through ‘theatre.’

But if one sets aside the urge to ask theatre-related questions, a whole other realm of possible questions arise: If the people present at this ceremony were not interested in the *Topèng Pajegan*, at least not in the introductory dances, what *were* they interested in? What can one find out about what different Balinese spectators, individually or in groups, like—or, rather, say they like? And what are the implications of this for the broader study of theatre?

As Ayu noted in the discussion quoted in the previous chapter (cross-ref. 195), certain elements are required for the completion of a ceremony, and Kodi's *Topèng* was one of them. The *pangabenan* (cremation ceremony) would not have been considered complete otherwise. It is the doing that matters in this case and whether the people present pay attention does not make a difference. This is one distinct sense of performance, as in the English 'the carrying out [...] of a duty, purpose, etc.,'¹²⁷ and it seems in this case to be the prime one. In other words, asking what *Topèng Pajegan* and *Wayang Lemah* are doing on this occasion needs to go beyond asking questions about theatre, or to ask questions using different presuppositions. In many ways, scholars may have been asking the wrong kinds of question. It would seem that questions such as 'what does it do?' and 'what needs to fit in that context?' may be more appropriate.

This is not, however, a return to a functionalist understanding of performance, as the question is not whether the performance accomplished a particular outcome, as, for instance, Schechner's 'efficacy' would have it (cross-ref. 146), but a question of having done the performance, what is involved in so doing and to what purposes. Without the *doing*, the ceremony would have been incomplete. Whether the *Topèng Pajegan* in particular and the whole ceremony in general was successful, however, is a different matter, one that can be, if such questions do arise, a complex issue dependent on a multitude of social relations and relative articulations.¹²⁸ This, again, is a very different question than whether the performance is 'effective' in Schechner's terms. Does the above emphasis on *doing* make Balinese technical in Habermas's sense, where 'technical' is linked to the natural sciences, while

¹²⁷ 'performance, n.'. OED Online. March 2014. Oxford University Press. Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/140783?redirectedFrom=performance> [Accessed 04/06/2014] and 'perform, v.'. OED Online. March 2014. Oxford University Press. Available from: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/140780?redirectedFrom=perform>. [Accessed 04/06/2014]

¹²⁸ For various examples of this, see Hobart 1979. For instance, the case of 'the trance of the political party agent's wife' (Hobart 1979: 607-609), is a particularly telling example of how political allegiances, social and economic factors can come into play in the decision to hold a ceremony and to elaborate on its necessity and outcome.

‘instrumental’ relates to the hermeneutic ones (Bohman and Rehg 2011)?¹²⁹ Is Balinese preoccupation with performance principally in relation to ‘technical-pragmatic claims about the means suitable to different goals’ (Bohman and Rehg 2011: no pagination), and if so, what is the role of interpretation in Bali? And does the dichotomy of practical *versus* interpretive square with Balinese presuppositions?

Substitutability and Purpose

In order to establish what the *Topèng Pajegan* did, it might be reasonable at this point to ask whether any other genre could substitute the *Topèng Pajegan* on this occasion—whether, for instance, it would have made a difference had the *Topèng Pajegan* been replaced by a *Lègong* or a *Dramatari*. In this *banjar* of this village, only a *Topèng Pajegan* would do. However, in different villages Balinese do not require a *Topèng Pajegan* for cremation ceremonies (but a *Wayang Lemah* is always necessary), which says much about the importance of context and situation. In other words, this is a cultural matter in Hobart’s sense: culture is, simply, ‘how we do things around here’ (Hobart 2000: 2), i.e. a question of practices and their articulations. However, what does the question of substitutability presuppose?

The rule of synonymy suggests that if one can substitute one word for another in a particular context without significantly altering the meaning, then in that context the two words are identical (or near enough for most purposes). So the substitution of a *Topèng Pajegan* with a *Lègong* or a *Dramatari* would become intelligible only if we consider all of these identical, and not even simply as objects that belong to the same category (i.e. as genres of ‘theatre,’ which, as noted earlier, is markedly absent from Balinese as a class term). The

¹²⁹ Habermas in this instance was drawing upon a reworking of the Cartesian mind:body dichotomy (for details, see Bohman and Rehg 2011). However, there is no evidence that Balinese work with such a dichotomy, and so the application of Habermas’s ideas here is necessarily limited.

example of a hammer, pliers, and a screwdriver might illustrate the point. They all belong to the category of tools, but using one instead of the other for a given task on the grounds that they are all tools would be absurd. However, Balinese clearly do not consider a *Topèng Pajegan*, a *Lègong*, and a *Dramatari* either identical or belonging to the same category—except, that is, as I argued in the previous chapter (cross-ref. 212-213), in cases where such distinctions need to be dissolved in order for these to be grouped together as ‘culture’ or ‘theatre’ and to be rendered into capital.

Apart from the major difference in the epistemological style between Europeans and Balinese that the absence of class terms suggests, the non-substitutability of ‘performance genres’ in these contexts comes in direct opposition to the capitalist logic of things that I examined in Chapter Seven. So the answer to ‘Do Balinese have theatre?’ seems to be: ‘Yes—but only when they have to in order to satisfy a set of specific capitalist-driven concerns.’ Balinese have learned to have theatre in certain contexts, which come pre-packaged with a limited range of preferred modes of engagement and discourse that have very little connection with what Balinese do in different contexts.

Does this mean that *Topèng Pajegan* is a unique case and so of limited concern? The ‘problem’ of unexpected modes of audience engagement (cross-ref. 214-216) is not confined to *Topèng Pajegan*, on which I focus here in part because it formed the basis for Emigh’s and Coldiron’s studies. As I noted above, *Wayang Lemah* was only watched by a young boy and myself. I later discovered that this is the case with most *Wayang Lemah*: only children and people with cameras seem to pay any attention to it. Both *Topèng Pajegan* and *Wayang Lemah*, however, take place in ceremonial contexts, where they are presumably not the main reason for attendance. However, even the *Sendratari* I described in the previous chapter (cross-ref. 208), which was the main attraction in the sense that people gathered in a given place at a given time because it coincided with the performance, was hardly the main focus of

the event for the majority of attendees. People were equally busy watching as chatting with friends, eating, selling food and wares, gambling, and so forth.

In addition, as I argued in Chapter Seven, the fact that certain contexts imply specific readings and imagine audiences in certain ways does not mean that this is what audiences actually do with a performance. So what does *Topèng Pajegan* do, and why is its performance so context-dependent? If we redefine performance as an assemblage of situated practices, then by definition performance cannot be independent of context. Then what else should one be asking or looking at when studying a *Topèng Pajegan* in the context of a ceremony?

On the one hand, as explained above, the *Topèng Pajegan* was needed in order to complete the ceremony. The other reason it was necessary was that it aided in creating *ramé*. In the context of a ritual sacrifice recounted in a *Geguritan*,¹³⁰ Vickers described *ramé* as such: ‘The positive descriptions of the ritual scene come together with representations of artistic performances and paintings which contribute to the ritual. The total effect of this is *ramé*, positive bustling crowdedness’ (1991: 92). However, *ramé* is not reserved for religious contexts. Kuta beach, with its markets and tourist activity, is often described as the most *ramé* place in Bali. Indeed, Vickers posited that ‘[r]amé is given various associations, from positive tumultuous gaiety to dangerous chaotic or immoral behaviour’ (1991: 94). However Vickers stopped there instead of investigating further. Is there no nuanced inflection of different kinds, degrees or qualities of *ramé* on different occasions? Or are Balinese so Durkheimianly mechanical (cross-ref. 199) that all that matters is *ramé*?

Vickers argued that

[t]he confusion and licentiousness are not incidental to the ritual, nor are they just additional detail to make the historical depiction more ‘realistic’. The unbridled behaviour is part of what is produced in ritual labour (*ngayah*); it becomes the laughter and enjoyment which

¹³⁰ *Geguritan* is a verse genre in the Balinese language that has been popular since the nineteenth century.

signals deep and meaningful personal involvement in the outcome of the ritual. The excessive behaviour is a kind of surplus energy to be put to ritual use, and the poem is quite explicit about this at the beginning, where it says the ritual was held to bring everyone together, literally to ‘make a crowd’ (*nggejenang* [...]), that is, to create *ramé* (1991: 93).

But how is ‘deep and meaningful personal involvement’ to be understood? This is a question of what *ramé* involves on specific occasions.

According to Madé Pujawati, *ramé* happens when the organizers of an event have done their job well and oversee the work and people’s needs appropriately. So the energy and laughter is the outcome of bringing people together well (Personal communication 15/12/2013). *Ramé*, then, could be considered as a way to evaluate organizational success, not of the performance, but of the event as a whole. Alternatively, can *ramé* be usefully seen as a complex performance, or as a spectacle? What is the relationship between these three, and what is the connection to Balinese religion, on the spectacularity of which so many have commented (Hooykaas 1973: 167-249)? It seems that English lacks a suitably encompassing notion to match *ramé*. So what does spectacle mean in this context, and is this a meaningful question? Also, if part of what the *Topèng* and the *Wayang* did in the case of the cremation ceremony described earlier was to create *ramé*, were these two the only performances involved?

If people’s attendance has less to do with watching a performance and more with going along for the *ramé* (which includes chat, gossip, and gambling, among other activities) as well as for fulfilling their ritual duties, it is only by a ruthless stripping aside (or a monologization) of the complex nature of participation that would allow one to study this event *as* theatre. Just as *niskala* notionally performs at *odalan*, the audience also performs on such occasions. In many instances during my fieldwork, people explained that when they are working for an *odalan* or similar occasion, acting loud and cheerful is expected. So, such events are often described in performative terms. Does the above suggest that perhaps the

question of whether Balinese have theatre should be recast as a question of who and how managed to turn such a complex event (a congeries of performances) into something so stripped of its social implications?

To address some of these questions, I would like to recall an incident mentioned briefly in Part One of the thesis.

One of my informants accompanied me to a *Lègong Topèng* performance during an *odalan* in Kètèwèl, where, after conferring with the priest, he informed me that the priest had told him that one of the masks did not feel like dancing that night. After further investigation, I found out that this was not the first time this particular mask had refused to dance—in fact, it had not danced for several years (Davies 2008: 199; Sudana 1977). Masks often refuse to dance. They are understood as beings with characters and moods in a way that extends human individuality to *niskala* (Madé Pujawati, personal communication 15/12/2013). In the Introduction, I used this example to question the limits of Emigh's idea that masked dances are practices that express and reinforce the belief in ancestral spirits (1996: 154). Here, I would like to explore what else may have been involved in this exchange.

Arguably, approaching a *padanda* (a brahmin high priest) can be a performance in itself: one needs to carry oneself with a specific demeanour, use a specific linguistic register, and observe certain rules, just as one has to do so to achieve *ramé*. Specifically to this occasion, I think that the statement that the mask did not want to dance made several simultaneous claims: on the part of the priest, a claim at an intimate connection with *niskala* and so at power; on the part of my informant, a boost to his status because of his relation to a powerful priest; and at the same time the creation of a debt, a powerful currency in Bali, for me, because my informant was providing me with something he thought I needed for my research.

The point is that none of the Balinese involved were particularly concerned with tracing the limits of ritual, theatre, or interpreting the mask's desires or the meaning of the dance on the occasion above. This exchange, however, (itself a performance?) had already accomplished several things in the process. Furthermore, there are other factors that may come into play. For instance, according to Fox, similar cases of a mask or being refusing to dance are quite numerous: 'I've seen this several times with one of the *barong* from [Village X]. It sometimes happens just before rain... which is helpful, given how much work goes into cleaning him up (and even repainting) after he gets wet!' (Personal communication 04/12/12). The point, however, is not to find out what 'the truth' about this is; it is to view these instances as practices, and as part of the *discours* around Balinese practices.

So combining this discussion with the one about *niskala* as audiences, it would seem that, while commentators agree about the participation of *niskala*, the way in which discussion is framed allows for variable interpretation. In any event, whether the discussion centres on performing or witnessing, both ways of framing the event involve agency being attributed to *niskala*. So any discussion of who does what in performance raises issues of complex agency (cross ref. 92, 236) and context.

Context

In the final part of my fieldwork, I stayed with a Balinese family in Bona, Gianyar.¹³¹ At night, the family and I would watch and discuss performances (some live, most recorded either by me or televised and broadcast, and some available commercially on VCDs). The

¹³¹ This low-caste family of four, consisted of Ketut, the father, Gèk, the mother, and their two children. Gèk is the youngest of nine siblings, one of whom is Mangku Wali (cross-ref. 218-219). Her mother was also a *pamangku*, a temple priest. Her family was very poor, and she did not finish school. She makes coconut oil, which she sells at local markets, and also works as a salesperson at a boutique in Ubud. Ketut has worked as a cook on American cruise ships, and now works for a merchant in Ubud. Sometimes they rent a room in their home to foreigners.

I stayed with this family for a couple of months on two different occasions. Some nights we watched together recordings of performances that they chose from a large selection that I provided. They commented freely on the performances while we watched, and we casually discussed some of the themes when they were over.

decision of what to watch from the array of genres I provided was made by the family. In one of our discussions, Gèk, the mother of the family, vehemently refused to watch *Calonarang*.

When I enquired about the reasons, she said:

Gèk: I am not brave enough. I have never watched *Calonarang*. People become corpses, they have a ceremony performed on them [*diupacari*].¹³² I am not brave enough, I go home.

Self: If it is on TV, can you watch?

Gèk: If it's during the day, it's OK. If it's at night, I am not brave enough.

Ketut: *Calonarang* has to take place at night, after midnight, it's more eerie that way. Because the time to perform *Calonarang*, the time to invite the people who have *sakti* to fill the dancers, it's night time. If it is in the middle of the day it would be funny, it's not the time (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).¹³³

According to Hildred Geertz, 'ideas about *sakti* and the beings that wield it stir up feelings of anxiety and even terror, but they also provide grounds for courage. They define the dangerous, but simultaneously suggest the ways to defeat it, at least temporarily. Courage is necessary for commanding *sakti*' (1994: 94). As Mangku Wali's comments about the inappropriateness of filming *Calonarang* suggest (cross-ref. 218-219), and as Hobart has argued, 'having truck with power is always potentially dangerous, especially if it is non-manifest (*niskala*) and so even more indeterminate than usual' (2000: 185). Situations involving some form of *sakti*, then, are not to be taken lightly. As Rubinstein noted, 'even today, spiritually vulnerable lay people prudently avoid the coastline and mountains, whereas people possessing sufficient concentrations of *sakti* venture there to commune with divine or netherworldly forces through meditation and other types of mystical participation, thereby accumulating more *sakti*' (2000: 105). At first glance, a *Calonarang* performance being

¹³² For *Calonarang* cross-ref. 22. Gèk here referred to the practice of having living men act as corpses during the performance, being ritually prepared in the way they would be for a cremation.

¹³³ See Appendix A, note 8.1. Also see my earlier comments about Balinese considering the performance of *Calonarang* during the day for Bateson and Mead inappropriate (cross-ref. 22).

dangerous may seem surprising—until one starts to investigate the practices involved without the restrictions placed on them by such foreign and pre-articulated concepts as ‘theatre.’

Wayan Sutawan, a producer of DewataTV, told me that in areas that are renowned for the power of their ceremonies (*yadnya*) the crew may ‘record [a *Calonarang*], but when we try to edit, there is no picture. So we understand these things may not be recorded. Their sacredness is extraordinary. We can make the recording, but the images are not recorded. The picture is blank. White’ (Interview 23/07/2012).¹³⁴ So concerns about *sakti* can shape a variety of practices, from watching performances, dancing, or even the practices of television crews. On the other hand, Ketut’s comment about the appropriate time for a *Calonarang* performance suggests that context is so important that even *sakti* depends on it.

So context becomes crucial in what a performance is supposed to do and how people engage with it (or do not). However, deciding what context is relevant is not self-evident, but itself involves an articulation, which involves power, both in establishing the context and in imposing (directly or indirectly) one’s articulation on others. So, to return to the case study that opened this chapter, what did people say about Kodi’s *Topèng Pajegan* and its context? The performance did not consist solely of the introductory dances that nearly no one watched; towards the end, when the *panasar* took over the spoken parts, a larger number of people (but certainly not everyone) had stopped what they were doing before and so watched and listened—people laughed, and cried. What was this part of the performance about, what did it do, and what did people have to say about it?

Ayu, my Balinese language teacher, focused on the religious concepts that were touched on in the performance, such as the idea of heaven and hell, the spirit trying to cross over to the other side by way of a very narrow bamboo bridge (the *titi gonggang*), below which there is hellfire. Kodi’s character talked about the importance of *banten* (offerings),

¹³⁴ See Appendix A, note 8.2.

and Ayu took a long time to explain that they are like a *surat pengantar*, an introduction letter that one has to carry with them when going to a public office. This came from the character himself, but the idea of such a bureaucratic image of the afterlife seemed to strike Ayu as apposite.¹³⁵ However, Ayu, like Kodi, is a civil servant by virtue of her being a teacher. Is this a naturalization or Balinization of state bureaucracy?

Ayu also went on to discuss the issue of reincarnation and the various ways in which karma can affect one's life—from getting hit when you think about stealing (an immediate effect on one's life)¹³⁶ to being born disabled in your next life. I think that the fact that the *Topèng Pajegan* can be used as an occasion for the discussion of religious themes is significant, as I shall argue below. However, there is a flip side to this: the way that politicians, government officials, academics, and figures in the *Parisada Hindu Dharma* (cross-ref. 170) have articulated religion and theatre so insistently over the last fifty years has created a persistent representation of these as 'indissolubly mixed' (giving rise to 'Balinese religious art' as a lucrative commercial niche). Such articulations were important in the 1960s, when Balinese were struggling to have their religion recognized by the government. Because the government needed Bali because of its art, as I argued earlier (cross-ref. 88, 108), linking art (or, rather, circumscribing certain practices and categorizing them as art) and religion was a means of consolidating the latter.

When I watched a recording of the *Topèng* with Kodi, he was surprised to see so many people cry and explained: 'Why do they cry? Because there are people among the dead who

¹³⁵ This did not come up during my discussion with either Ayu or Kodi, but Sang Suratma, the person in charge of the afterlife, is also the one who writes the letter that results in each person's death. However, the phrase used (*surat pengantar*) belongs to the vocabulary of contemporary Indonesian life, where introduction letters are of particular importance in taking care of official business. It would be interesting to research the use of letters earlier than twentieth century Bali, but this is a topic for another time.

¹³⁶ Ayu's statement was rather strange, as she seemed to equate the intention with the deed, whereas Balinese law does not distinguish, for instance, between manslaughter and murder, which renders the issue of intention irrelevant.

are the same with this dialogue' (Interview 12/08/2012).¹³⁷ Then he became emotional: 'I had a friend among the people who were cremated that day. He died young, he had three children, his first wife had already died. His second wife, her children were still young. [...] So there are many people who cried because it was like they are hearing, seeing the spirit talk with his wife, his children. Or there are people who think the same thing' (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).¹³⁸ He then recalled another performance at a cremation ceremony in Blahbatuh, after which the son of the deceased told him 'This was my father talking' (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).¹³⁹

However, the story-context within which the *panasar* appeared and talked to the people at the ceremony was not about Singapadu or Blahbatuh, or about their contemporaries. It was loosely based on the story of Sidha Karya (trans. 'the one who accomplishes the ceremony or ritual work'),¹⁴⁰ set in the kingdom of Gélégél in the sixteenth century: the king needed help performing a ceremony, and wanted to know whether it would help him reach heaven. And yet, when the *panasar* came to talk to them, it was their loved ones, not someone from the time and place of the story. So what is at issue? What kind of performance is a *Topèng Pajegan*?

First, a *Topèng Pajegan* is not the reading of a text in any definition of the term. I would argue that it is also far from the idea of art as the expression of the artist's genius and the accompanying essentialism I explored in Chapter Six. In Bali, an utterance, a performance, or the reading of a text are not significant for the underlying proposition, as with most logocentric European approaches whose objective would be to do away with the obscurity of the utterance in order to access the meaning or significance, which is, in turn, minimally context-dependent. By contrast, Kodi's *Topèng* was entirely context-dependent,

¹³⁷ See Appendix A, note 8.3.

¹³⁸ See Appendix A, note 8.4. It should be noted here that both what Kodi described and his description of it to me can be understood as performances.

¹³⁹ See Appendix A, note 8.5.

¹⁴⁰ For details see Kodi, Sedana and Foley 2005.

not least because the audience was expected to participate to a certain degree, as a *Topèng* is not intended as a finished work, but as something that each spectator can work on for him or herself. This distributes agency in a way that removes it from being effectively under the control of an actor or *dalang*. So it follows that members of the audience are also directly engaged in the performance as, without them, it is *gabeng*, not yet complete. There is, then, a complex agency involving both actors and audience, in different ways on different occasions and settings.

In addition, Kodi's performance involved a special relationship with the past, which he then used to draw parallels with the current occasion and to offer some critical remarks regarding familial relationships (brothers fighting over their deceased father's fortune, families over-borrowing to hold magnificent ceremonies which they cannot afford, instead of doing what they can with the fruits of their own labour) and advice (*panglèmèk*). As Hobart has noted, it is common for such performances to 'draw on what are considered to be accounts of the past (Balinese or, less commonly, Indian) to recreate political régimes, principally through court life, as examples which set the implicit standard against which the present may be judged' (1991: 4).

This is, in a sense, a practice of historical understanding. To what extent, then, might Collingwood's concept of re-enactment (1946) be helpful in order to understand what happens in performance? An additional question would be to what extent and under what circumstances each member of the audience is free to engage with the re-enactment in their own way. And to what extent is this the case, provided that re-enactments, and their contexts, obviously differ?

Re-enactment and Interpretation

There are two aspects to re-enactment that may be relevant. Collingwood used the idea of re-enactment to describe the historian's process for understanding the past. 'We study history [...] in order to attain self-knowledge' (Collingwood 1946: 315). Kodi's *Topèng* drew from the past in order to inform the present, to fulfil current ceremonial needs, and to comfort. It also provided an articulating framework that involved the Indonesian nation state, as evidenced by the bureaucratic image of the afterlife that Ayu commented on. In Collingwood's account of re-enactment, however, understanding the past involves a process of 'becoming': to think historically, to understand a historical document, is to discover the thought of the person who created it; in a certain way to become that person.

[T]o be [Thomas] Becket is to know that I am Becket, that is, to know that I am my own present self re-enacting Becket's thought, myself being in that sense Becket. I do not 'simply' become Becket, for a thinking mind is never 'simply' anything: it is its own activities of thought, and it is not these 'simply' [...], for thought is not mere immediate experience but always reflection or self-knowledge, the knowledge of oneself as living in these activities (Collingwood 1946: 297).

The notion of 'becoming' (*jadi, dadi*) is often used by performers in Bali to describe what happens when they get 'in character' (with or without the use of a mask). What possible relationships might there be between Balinese ideas of becoming and Collingwood's?

In Kodi's *Topèng Pajegan*, it is not the mask that allows Kodi to 'become' his audience's loved ones. He uses his knowledge of the current situation in the village, bits and pieces of dialogue that he has accumulated over the years, from the news to chatting with people at the *warung*. For example, something from a chat with a drunkard can be used for a ceremony at a temple. He 'takes' these pieces, and when he needs them 'takes them out' and 'puts them in' a *Topèng*. Words, stories, jokes, knowledge can be had, taken out, carried, thrown like a ball among actors (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).

Consider the following excerpt, where Kodi talked about the process of collecting materials for performance. In this, he used an actor named ‘Pasuk Maku’ as an example. *Pasuk Maku* means ‘to make a spike or nail go in’ or ‘to fix firmly’ in Balinese, and so the phrase could be taken as referring to an actor’s ability to criticize but also to ‘fix firmly’ aspects of what it is to be Balinese. So, perhaps it is not unreasonable to assume that Pasuk Maku was used by Kodi as an alter ego. This is a strategy Balinese often use to avoid the perceived arrogance implicit in talking about themselves as representative of ‘the Balinese way’ (cross-ref. 253, where Ketut Suanda did something similar):

For example there is an actor called Pasuk Maku. This Pasuk Maku has to communicate with the world. In the community, in the *warung* [cafe/shop/tavern] he is happy. That is why actors drink at the *warung* [before a performance], or go to the cockfights, isn’t that so? He also likes fishing. Because that way he can gather information about the community. This is the philosophy between the macro and the micro. The macro has to enter into the micro. After that, when we need to give a performance, we take it out. This actor needs to take a chance with the community. It doesn’t matter whether the community is good or if it is bad, whether people like to drink or not, it doesn’t matter. We take it, what they say, we take that. We take it, and then we have it, and now presently we say ‘oh, I have some material that is suitable for this, and that material is suitable for that, etc. Maybe I can use this material for a cremation ceremony.’ I have heard stories like this. I chat with a drunkard, someone who likes to drink, maybe this is suitable to be used in a performance at the temple. Because even though that person likes to drink, sometimes he has thoughts that are positive, isn’t that so? Some of the things he says can be true. Even though his behaviour is not right, his dialogue is. This we take. I know he is a drunkard, but his words can be correct, so I take them. So that actor has to be able to chat freely. About what, who knows? At the *warung* we can chat a lot. Sometimes we read books, then we hear something at the community, and we combine them. And then we find a place for them in the story. So the macro enters the micro, and then we perform and it comes out again. We return it to the macro. From the macro to the micro and from the micro to the macro again (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).¹⁴¹

Kodi’s reference to the ‘community,’ for which he used the Indonesian word *masyarakat* (cross-ref. 169), casts the whole argument in starkly Indonesian terms. This is in

¹⁴¹ See Appendix A, note 8.6.

keeping with Kodi's position as a civil servant and an articulator of Balinese culture.

However, what also comes out of this discussion is, I think, an idea of how Kodi understands knowledge. Therefore, an analysis of the practices around a *Topèng* (the idea of knowledge, the idea of becoming, of performing *niskala* and so on) can be a discussion of what Becker termed 'epistemology' in his analysis of Javanese *Wayang* (1972), or what could be termed a metaphysics-in-practice.

So how are we to understand Balinese performance-related practices? Building on my critique of textuality from Part One, in this chapter I have tried to argue that even taking 'text' in the expanded sense of 'any discourse fixed by some mode of representation' (Peterson 2003: 60) cannot account for the many ways in which Balinese engage with performances, not least because they do not seem to be concerned with delimiting performance. Instead, Balinese focus on context as a determining factor because they are practice-oriented and practices are necessarily situated and context-specific. This requires an examination of Balinese performance-related practices, including practices of commentary, that will allow for the possibility that Balinese are working against the usual presuppositions of theatre (for instance, that it hinges on watching), performance (such as that it hinges on text or textuality), or agency (such as its equation with activity).

Many of the practices I examined in this chapter hinged on the idea of interpretation: actors interpreting the past, audiences interpreting what they are watching, analysts interpreting performances, practices, and contexts. However, interpretation presupposes the interpreting subject and the idea of interiority, which, according to Taylor, is a distinctive feature of Western modernity: 'But strong as this partitioning [the inner self and the world around us] of the world appears to us, as solid as this localization may seem, and anchored in the very nature of the human agent, it is in large part a feature of our world, the world of modern, Western people' (1989: 111). How far, then, can the idea of interpretation be taken

in Bali, and what is its role in Balinese, context-specific, performance? What alternatives are there, and how might recasting the question of interpretation as one of rethinking, commenting, discussing, exemplifying, and so forth, transform the issues involved? These questions will form the basis of the following chapter.

Chapter Nine: Balinese Performances and Interpretation

In the previous chapter I focused on examples of performance-related practices from what usually falls within the general category of religious performances in Bali—and considered the problems associated with this terminology—in order to address the question of what and whom Balinese ‘theatre’ is for, and how performance practices can be studied once one has gone past the disciplinary tendency to naturalize them as theatre. In this chapter, I shall consider the same questions, albeit with regard to small-scale performances that do not take place within either religious festivals and ceremonies or in the context of government-sponsored events (as in Chapter Seven).¹⁴² In addition, to go back to Schechner’s ‘functions’ of performance, since these performances are not part of a religious ceremony, are they only entertainment? What are the issues involved in the very framing of this question?

A second point that I raised in the previous chapter and that I shall develop here is the suggestion that many analyses of Balinese performance-related practices hinge on the idea of interpretation, as do anthropological approaches that assume the analyst’s role is to interpret other people’s cultures and gain access to meaning. What does interpreting as a practice involve? And how might one understand meaning in Bali? To what extent and in what contexts do Balinese interpret themselves?

Interpreting

According to Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures*, culture ‘is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action’ (1973:

¹⁴² However, it may be useful to keep in mind that, as will become evident, these distinctions cannot carry too much weight, as such events are not always clearly circumscribed, while the people involved may play different roles in different circumstances.

145). But what does interpretation presuppose, how relevant is it, and how might it relate to the entire range of practices that Balinese may be involved in when it comes to performance?

While this might seem a rather curious question, it may be useful to pause before assuming that everyone everywhere interprets, still more in the same way. Who is entitled or authorized to interpret and who not differs contextually and cross-culturally. An example that brings to the fore the connection between interpretation and authority would be the case of the Catholic church, where interpretation of scripture is the preserve of priests and experts, the only ones trusted with the role of ‘mediating the written word of God’ (Goody 1987: 119). Who gets to interpret in contemporary Bali, and what is interpretation for? And what are the implications of treating European hermeneutic techniques as universal and as necessary and sufficient for understanding others?

First, there is the problem of the possibility of equally valid alternative interpretations: ‘An interpretation must not only be probable, but more probable than another interpretation’ (Ricoeur 1976: 79). This involves a process of validation by which to assess possible interpretations. However, ‘validation is not verification. It is an argumentative discipline comparable to the juridical procedures used in legal interpretation, a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability’ (Ricoeur 1976: 78). But what is it that needs to be validated in the first place? In other words, how does one arrive at possible interpretations? Paul Ricoeur’s response was that ‘we have to guess the meaning of the text because the author’s intention is beyond our reach’ (1976: 75). So even the starting point of the process of validation is not unambiguous. This transforms interpretation into a circular process of guesswork and validation based on uncertainty.

The above also implies that the notion of interpretation presupposes a triple unity: on the one hand a unified subject or self, who, through the process of interpretation, gains access to the meaning of a work, and on the other, the unity of the work and its meaning, which

ultimately hinges upon the unified intellect that created it, however inaccessible its intentions. Interpretation, in a sense, becomes a process of mediation between unified subjects. But ‘[i]n the modern sense, subjectivity depends primarily on the unity of self-consciousness, and on interiority, freedom, and personal autonomy’ (Williams 2013). In addition, Taylor has argued that

[o]ur modern notion of the self is related to, one might say constituted by, a certain sense (or perhaps a family of senses) of inwardness. [...] In our languages of self-understanding, the opposition ‘inside-outside’ plays an important role. We think of our thoughts, ideas, or feelings as being ‘within’ us, while the objects in the world which these mental states bear on are ‘without.’ Or else we think of our capacities or potentialities as ‘inner,’ awaiting the development which will manifest them or realize them in the public world (1989: 111).

Taylor also noted that ‘[w]ithout the unified self which we see articulated in Plato’s theory, the modern notion of interiority could never have developed’ (1989: 120). This should cast serious doubt on whether either the concept of a unified self or of interiority can be assumed unproblematically to be general in Bali. The idea of interiority can seem a distinctly foreign concept, as it is one that originates in ‘the world of modern, Western people. The localization [of inside-outside] is not a universal one, which human beings recognize as a matter of course [...]. Rather, it is a function of a historically limited mode of self-interpretation, one which has become dominant in the modern West and which may indeed spread thence to other parts of the globe, but which had a beginning in time and space and may have an end’ (Taylor 1989: 111). Assuming the self-evidence of such modern, Eurocentric concepts, then, is ignoring their historicity and naturalizing them, while at the same time silencing, or erasing the possibility of, alternatives.

In addition, the question of interpretation being the process through which to discover meaning is further complicated if we consider Balinese ideas about it. The word most closely related to meaning in Balinese is *artos*; however, this is rarely used in discussion. As Ayu’s commentary suggested earlier (cross-ref. 195), Balinese tend to focus on the purpose

(*tujuan/tetujon*) rather than meaning. In addition, what one could generally term interpretive practices in Bali involve a wide range of activities, such as ‘explicating (*ngartiang*), exemplifying (*nyontohin*), sifting (*nyaringin*) or unravelling (*melut*)’ (Hobart 2014a: 17). There is, then, a variety of practices such as rethinking, commenting, discussing, making fun of, ignoring, and so forth, which can only be collapsed into the single notion of interpretation by abstraction.

It follows from the above that, if interpretation’s primary goal is to arrive at or explain the ‘meaning’ of something, such as a text, an utterance, or a textualized practice (cross-ref. 182-187), in Bali this would necessarily underplay the context, the social conditions and cultural circumstances within which these practices take place. The search for meaning also upholds a transmission model for understanding language and speech, assuming that the communication of a message is its primary, or even sole, purpose. It largely ignores questions that pertain to representation and articulation as practices, and erases the circumstances, purposes and consequences of these practices. So rather than focusing on an abstract analytical concept such as meaning, or trying to establish what are the essential features of interpretation, perhaps it might be more helpful to consider the kinds of interpretive practices used for Balinese performance, both by Balinese and by outside commentators. In what circumstances can one say that Balinese interpret? And what is the relationship between meaning and knowledge in Bali, where ‘stories and texts only become meaningful by virtue of being read, sung, paraphrased or performed; but without engaged listeners or spectators nothing significant can take place’ (Hobart 2014a: 18)?

So, when I suggest that one of the features of performance is that it offers a way for Balinese to rethink, engage with and comment on their past and what is going on around them through performance, what exactly do I mean? What is it that they do? To what extent

can this idea of interpretation be compatible with a genre such as *Drama Gong*,¹⁴³ which is extemporized, long, and with distinct episodes that may, as I shall show in this chapter, be very loosely threaded together to form the event we call a performance? And who is entitled to interpret or comment publicly under what circumstances, with what purposes and outcomes?

What emerges from the discussion above is that interpretation lumps together a whole range of diverse practices. To treat discussing or commenting as interpretation stretches the notion absurdly and overlooks practice. In answer to Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle of guess and validation, Foucault argued that one of the problems of interpretation is that it 'finds itself before the obligation of interpreting itself endlessly, of always correcting itself' (1990: 66). So perhaps a more useful approach to interpretation would involve, on the one hand, asking not 'what there is in the signified, but [...] who has posed the interpretation' (Foucault 1990: 66), and, on the other, considering interpretations as situated practices to be scrutinized in their specific historical circumstances.¹⁴⁴

Cupak

In order to address the questions above, I shall examine extracts from a *Drama Gong* performance entitled *Cupak Pengeng* (Cupak is Confused), which took place in Klungkung¹⁴⁵ and broadcast by BaliTV, as part of their *Lila Cita: Drama Gong Lawak*¹⁴⁶ programme, in

¹⁴³ *Drama Gong* was created in the wake of the 1965-66 killings, as a form of popular performance in colloquial Balinese, combining extemporized, slapstick-type humour and acting with Western-style melodramatic acting (*drama*), accompanied by *gamelan* (*gong*). For details see Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 96.

¹⁴⁴ This is necessarily a preliminary investigation on interpretation, aided by Hobart's previous work on the subject (1982, 2014a).

¹⁴⁵ No exact date was given, but usually no more than a few months intervene between the filming of a performance and its television.

¹⁴⁶ *Lila Cita* is a daily BaliTV programme that broadcasts a variety of performance genres that were recorded live. A majority of the broadcasts consist of *sanggar* exams. *Drama Gong Lawak* is the part of the programme devoted to *Drama Gong* performances that are particularly rich in jokes (*lawak* is usually translated as 'buffoonery').

Both BaliTV and DewataTV are routinely commissioned by *sanggar* and villages to record and broadcast local performances.

four parts, in February/March 2012. I chose to focus on this particular performance because the family that hosted me in Bona (cross-ref. 227)¹⁴⁷ picked it out as a favourite, and the one they were most eager to watch. They singled out *Cupak Pengeng* from a selection of performances which included another *Drama Gong* performance with lesser known actors, *Arja*, which they found boring because ‘they sing all the time,’ and a *Calonarang*, which Gèk said she was not ‘brave enough’ (cross-ref. 228-229) to watch, even though it featured a favourite actor (Ketut Suanda as the character Cedil).

Cupak, the eponymous character of the *Drama Gong* in question, is a figure from a well-known Balinese folktale, commonly referred to as the story of ‘Cupak and Grantang,’ which has been the source material for various performances at least as early as Soedarsono’s study of Indonesian ‘dances’ (1968), where he categorized it as a ‘dance-drama’ (1968: 175). Moerdowo also included the ‘Cupak Dance Drama’ among those ‘based on Balinese folklore’ (1977: 79) and noted that ‘[t]his story is also used as a theme in the *Cupak Wayang Kulit*, puppet-shadow play. But unfortunately as a drama as well as *Wayang Kulit* performance, it is almost forgotten. However, it is still performed as a dance drama in the village of Kramas, south of Gianyar and the only living *Wayang Kulit Cupak* narrator is I Ketut Rinda from Blahbatuh. When the story is performed as a dance drama, the dance technique is that of the Gambuh’ (1977: 79). Since then, however, the story, or rather storyline, has been used in *Barong Landung*¹⁴⁸ (Slattum & Schraub 2003: 106), *Wayang Kulit*, and *Drama Gong*. It has also inspired modern drama, such as *Cupak Eats Land*, which

¹⁴⁷ As I mentioned earlier, the family commented casually on the performance while we watched, and discussed some of the themes they thought were interesting after it was over. So this is not a sustained analysis of the performance in question, but simply an examination of some of the ways Balinese might engage with televised performance.

¹⁴⁸ A performance involving a ‘pair of larger-than-life body puppets, one male and one female’ (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 107).

was staged for the opening of the International Conference & Festival for North Balinese Culture (see North Bali 2009).¹⁴⁹

It should also be noted here that I use the term ‘story’ loosely, as the various performances that bear some relation to Cupak, depending on genre, level of extemporization, context and the themes chosen to be focused on by the performers, can be anything from a faithful reenactment of one of the folktale’s many versions to an assemblage of numbers that only barely touch on its themes. So before going on to examine *Cupak Pengeng*, it may be useful to present here a summary of the broad strokes of the story of Cupak and Grantang, as it was, to a large extent, taken as common knowledge by most of the spectators with whom I talked:¹⁵⁰

The wife of a newly-wed Brahman (after being raped by both/either-or Brahma and Wisnu in some accounts), gives birth to twins: Cupak, the elder, and Grantang. Cupak and Grantang, despite being twins, are opposites when it comes to appearance and character: Cupak is ugly, lazy, greedy, and gluttonous, while Grantang is hard-working, handsome, and respectful. When ordered by their father to work in the fields, Grantang does all the work, but it is Cupak who deviously takes credit for everything. In some versions, this causes Grantang to be expelled and to leave home, while Cupak decides to follow his brother. They arrive to the kingdom of Kediri, where they take it upon themselves to save the princess from a giant (Detya Menarung or Limandaru) who has kidnapped her. In other versions, the reason the brothers leave home is the news of the kidnapping. The twins go after the giant, but it is again Grantang who defeats him and saves the princess. However, Cupak tricks him and leaves him for dead in a well. Cupak is betrothed to the princess as a reward for saving her. Meanwhile, Grantang manages to make a ladder and climb out of the well. In some versions of the story, Cupak hears that his brother is still alive and sends a pack of dogs against him, captures him, and throws him bound in the sea. In other versions, Grantang simply wanders, emaciated and weak. He is then found by a fisherman, who takes care of him. Upon hearing that her real saviour is still alive, the

¹⁴⁹ Original title: *Cupak Makan Tanah*, performed by Madé Sukadana and his troupe (North Bali 2009).

¹⁵⁰ There are evident methodological problems in trying to summarize ‘a folk story’ with ‘many versions,’ as the different versions presuppose an original, which is, however, only recognizable and re-constitutable through its versions, rendering the whole process circular. However, what I present here are the broad outlines of the story as it was relayed to me by Ayu, my Balinese language teacher, and by the family in Bona, as well as two accounts of the story as it was presented in Soedarsono (1968) and Moerdowo (1977). As this thesis deals mainly with representations and their articulation, an attempt to reconstitute an ‘original,’ or a search for accuracy or consistency between the different accounts does not only run counter to my methodology, but is largely beside the point.

princess, who is still not married to Cupak, convinces Grantang to present himself at the palace and fight for her. She also persuades her father to give her to the most skillful warrior. Grantang prevails and marries the princess. Cupak, in some versions, is exiled.

The main theme of the story is the idea of kingship and what is involved in one's fitness to rule, as well as the concept of *rwa bhinéda*, a Kawi phrase that translates as 'the two that are different' (Fox 2011: 242; Widiassa Kenitén 2013) and which, in contemporary Balinese usage, refers to 'the idea that all states and qualities are accompanied by, or bear the trace of, their opposite—e.g., happiness and suffering, beneficence and malevolence, female and male' (Fox 2011: 242 n. 45). As the story suggests, however, these opposites do not exist harmoniously, but in a state of perpetual conflict.

Hildred Geertz argued that conflict in Bali

is not evidence of chaotic breakdown of the cosmos, but the fundamental characteristic of life. The Balinese world is one in which the many elements are never harmoniously united, in which there is no single all-encompassing principle, no way of comprehending the whole. It is a universe of fluctuating, flowing, shifting forces, which can sometimes be commanded by certain human beings, the masters of *sakti*, who momentarily and precariously can draw some of these forces together into a strong local node of power, which will inevitably later dissolve again (1994: 95).

It seems to be the ruler's responsibility, or otherwise a defining characteristic of a ruler, to be able to give these opposing forces the appearance of a coherent whole, to bring together 'all the different worlds, manifest and intangible, of his or her various subjects, conflicting and potentially incommensurable as they are' (Hobart 2000: 267). Hobart has likened this process of ordering the world to an 'articulation' in the mechanical sense (2000: 237; also Fox 2011: 292-92), which references the Cultural Studies idea of the notion (cross-ref. 65). In the following sections, I shall examine how these themes were treated in *Cupak Pengeng* and what the different commentators (in which I include the performers, as the first to 'interpret,' or 'comment' on, the themes of the story by means of their performance) chose to focus on.

Cupak Pengeng

Cupak Pengeng was only loosely based on the story discussed above, as is often the case in Balinese performances. Most of the dialogue was extemporized, which often resulted in incomplete sentences and comments that were not followed up. There was, consequently, much space for ambiguity, openness and unfinalizability (Bakhtin 1963) in the way any one line could be taken by the other actors, as well as by spectators and commentators. In other words, the most decisive factor in discussing and understanding *Cupak Pengeng* is context.

One of the problems, but also, perhaps, one of the most interesting features of Balinese performance for Media Studies, is, then, the difficulty of translating and ‘interpreting’ such a performance, particularly given the fact that it is already twice removed from the live event, by the act of recording and transcribing it. And who is going to be interpreting at all, unless it is the expert analyst, foreign or local? Balinese are engaging with and commenting on the quality of a performance, among other things, but who actually interprets in any strict sense of the term? Since the performance is not the re-enactment of a pre-determined script or text, a view of interpretation as the decoding of the performance in order to accurately arrive at the original meaning or intention behind it is completely unsuitable and largely useless. Furthermore, such an approach would go against the Balinese tendency to avoid assertions or judgments about intentions, which are not manifest, and so are considered *niskala* and therefore difficult to know, if possible at all (Hobart 2014a: 10). In other words, interpretation that hinges on pinpointing intention is inherently problematic in Bali.

The caution towards talking definitively about hidden meanings and intentions is exemplified in the concept of *basa makulit*, i.e. ‘language with skin.’ One such example is the phrase ‘*payuk perungpung misi brem*,’ which literally means ‘a broken pot containing rice wine.’ This is both a case of *basa makulit*, and an explication on what *basa makulit* is (or is for). According to Gusti Lanan, a well-known Balinese actor based in Ubud, this phrase

refers to the idea that appearances can be deceiving: ‘one’s face may be ugly, but his/her heart may be extraordinarily good,’¹⁵¹ but it can very well be the other way around. The point is that ‘it is not yet certain’ (*belum tentu*) and one should be hesitant in talking with conviction about what is inside and cannot be readily seen (*niskala*) (Lanan, interview 20/05/2012).

Taking the above into consideration, I think there is reason enough to treat interpretation with caution, and as a situated practice with specific purposes and outcomes. Rather than seeking the meaning of performance, I shall examine what various groups of people have said about the performance and the themes it touched upon, and explore the possibility of viewing this commentary as a performance in itself.

The promotional trailer (see ‘Promo Tayang Drama Lawak Cupak Pengeng’ 2013) for this televised production of *Cupak Pengeng* stressed the fact that it featured well-known actors and characters such as Dolar, Cedil, Sangar, and others, all of whom are *bondrés*.¹⁵² As the excerpt I shall address first focuses mainly on the role of Cedil, a few introductory comments about this character in particular are in order.

Cedil was created in 1998 by I Ketut Suanda, a dancer, actor and musician who graduated from ISI (STSI). Cedil is one of the most recognizable *bondrés* characters in Bali today. He is low-caste, dressed in a bright yellow synthetic vest and a cross between a Balinese lower garment (*kamben*) and white pants. He wears a white headscarf and white makeup with simple features, raised eyebrows, and a frown (Figure 3). He has a very thin voice, and generally does not talk much.

In the excerpt transcribed here, however, Cedil comes on stage as the King (of) Pitch-Black Night (*Prabu Peteng Dedet*) (Figure 4).

¹⁵¹ See Appendix A, note 9.1.

¹⁵² *Bondrés* are ‘demotic, and usually comic, figures that exemplify the rough-and-tumble of life outside the privileged circle of the court’ (Fox 2011: 226). Photos and descriptions of each of these characters can be found in Appendix B.

Excerpt A¹⁵³

Dolar (Figure 5) and Dolir (Figure 6), singing, announce the arrival of Dewa Agung Cedil from Bangli to seduce a 'sexy' girl,¹⁵⁴ marry her and spend their honeymoon at a seven star hotel.¹⁵⁵

Dolir: Now there is a pitch-black night in the world.¹⁵⁶ Come on, Dewa Agung Cedil. Du Agung is ill.¹⁵⁷ If a king is ill his subjects must surely be ill as well.

Dolar: This person is shy.

Dolir calls Cedil and he appears at the palace door. He waits there, not speaking. [...] Dolar sings as is customary for the entrance of a king.

Dolar: All his followers... [Stops. To Dolir:] They can't really have chosen someone like him to become king. People [using *kasar* language] are sick.

Dolir: [to Dolar] His lineage doesn't fit.¹⁵⁸ [To Cedil, very respectfully] Go on.

Dolar: Go on. Yes yes, go on, walk.

[To Dolir:] This one [talking about himself] is an affectionate servant. He [Cedil] doesn't speak.

Dolir: His speech is difficult.

Cedil tries to speak.

Dolar: He hasn't spoken in three days.

Dolir: Let him, let him. [...]

¹⁵³ See original in Appendix A, note 9.2.

¹⁵⁴ Although not explicit in this passage, this refers to the Princess of Kediri. Prabu Peteng Dedet has come to Kediri to compete against the other suitors, including Cupak and Grantang, in the competition that the Princess has set up.

¹⁵⁵ Although this scene is set in traditional Bali, the language of this passage and the reference to the hotel hints at modern times.

¹⁵⁶ This is a pun on the name of Cedil's king persona.

¹⁵⁷ *Gelem-geleman* means '(often) ill' or 'faint,' but it can also mean 'weak at the knees' because of lust. There is word play, here, and the phrase is left suitably open and ambiguous.

¹⁵⁸ This is a reference to the fact that a commoner is not of a lineage fitting for a king.

Cedil keeps being interrupted every time he is about to speak. He keeps adjusting the kris on his back, which is slipping. He ducks under the hanging microphone, dances around it with his head. Finally:

- Cedil: [in a very small voice] Hello.
Dolar: Is this speaking?
Cedil: [to Dolar] Eh, Lardo.
Dolir: Weh! Is this how he speaks? He is turning words around. Lardo.
This is Dolar. Lardo!
Cedil: Oh is it Dolar?
Dolar: Yes.
Cedil: Sorry [in English], I forgot. Dolar, follow me from behind. [Old Javanese]: follow me.

Dolir: [using High Balinese] Do I follow?
Cedil: [using common language] Come with.
[Relates the story in Old Javanese.] [...]

Shortly after the extract here, on the way to the kingdom of Kediri, Cedil stumbled and hurt his leg, so Dolir fetched him a wheelchair, which Dolar promptly used for himself. When Cedil finally convinced his servants to bring him the chair because he was in pain, he climbed on it backwards and they had to instruct him on how to sit in it properly. Dolir demonstrated, and Cedil wheeled him around the stage, until he realized something was wrong with this situation.

There are several issues that I find intriguing in this short passage, and I shall examine them in turn.

The most obvious one is that a character known to everyone as a funny, low-status person, now plays a king, which surprised and amused the family in Bona. However, Cedil is

not *disguised* as a king. He represents a king, and by extension, kingship, a person with power and the capacity to rule. What purpose does this serve?

I asked Ketut Suanda, the actor who plays Cedil, whether he sees *bondrés* as entertainment, and whether it can do other things as well.

It does several things. Once I read about a comedian¹⁵⁹ (*pelawak*), or a *bondrés* player, who was like a critic, or like a mediator, like an informant. He was like a critic. Or even like a fighter. Even heroism. But without him knowing it, this was a thing that he was already doing. For example, as a critic. He had already exercised his critique, but he didn't know it. Because he had never read about it or was told by people about becoming a critic, or how, like an ABC [an alphabet, or a manual for criticism]. He criticized. For example, there is a big temple ceremony [*odalan*]. There are people who are praying at this ceremony. There is also loud music. The next day, I am performing. I talk about that. I criticize that. But in a refined way, so that the people who invited me won't be mad, they won't be embarrassed. I am like a critic. The next day, those who are holding the ceremony will not have loud music any more. They will have received the criticism. But I will not call the person holding the ceremony to say 'Sir, tomorrow don't allow the young people to play music.' I only criticize a little bit (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).¹⁶⁰

What was, then, Cedil's representation of kingship criticizing?

The king here is represented as shy, a coward, unable to carry his sword properly. However, his most important flaw, the one people found most amusing and that the characters made the most fuss about, is his speech impediment, his small voice. This is very much unlike a good ruler, who needs to have *wibawa* (authority, presence)¹⁶¹ and the appropriate physical traits that accompany it. Commenting on Cedil's role in *Cupak Pengeng*, and on kings in *Drama Gong* in general, Ketut (the father of my host family in Bona), said: 'A king should not make jokes. I mean it's not appropriate, because the character of a young

¹⁵⁹ Commentators deferring to unidentified books or unnamed authorities is common in Bali; I understand it as a way of displacing authority away from oneself, while avoiding the responsibility (or sometimes arrogance) that comes with pointing to oneself as the source of information or knowledge, and also the potential danger of direct confrontation.

¹⁶⁰ See Appendix A, note 9.3.

¹⁶¹ From Sanskrit and Old Javanese *wibhawa* 'power, majesty, exalted position; wealth, possessions, affluence.' *Wibawa* is Javanese and Balinese, used in Indonesian by adoption.

king must be serious and more commanding (*berwibawa*). His words have significance [*makna*; also purpose, meaning]. Like a *dalang*'s' (Bona, Discussion 23/05/2012).¹⁶²

Unlike Cedil's high-pitched voice, what Ketut described is the 'low-pitched and full-throated, almost raspy voice' that deserves 'respect and awe' (Wallis 1980: 109). Suanda in this performance, however, made it obvious that, unlike the other actors, for whom the use of microphones was seamlessly incorporated into their performance as a mere technical necessity, Dewa Agung Cedil needed a microphone in order to be heard. He danced around it, exploiting it for comical effect, but also, I think, making a point. Dolar, in addition, found it very hard to believe that people could have chosen someone like him as a king. In the timeframe where the play is placed, i.e. traditional Bali, this can mean that someone chooses to align oneself with that king. However, the way it was put ('to become king'), coupled with the muddled timeframe of the introductory song, is ambiguous to the point that it could suggest a process of election, and so point in the direction of elected government officials. This is necessarily rather speculative; however, a low-status character like Cedil becoming King is quite common in Javanese *Wayang*, where it has been used as a critique of both Dutch colonial authorities (in the play 'Petruk Becomes King' / *Petruk Dadi Ratu*; see Sudibyo-prono *et al* 1991: 401) and of various Indonesian presidents (Pausacker 2004). In addition, there is a recent example of a performance in which Cupak himself came to represent those in power: in *Cupak Eats Land*, mentioned earlier, Cupak has a strange appetite for land, and so he consumes anything from beachfront, forest and lake side estate to the land that houses the local government. According to the organizers of the International Conference & Festival for North Balinese Culture, '[t]his modern drama is a form of social and political critic [sic] of popular issues that happen in Bulèlèng. It talks about land acquisition by the tourism magnate, corruption in the house of representatives and other

¹⁶² See Appendix A, note 9.4.

social issues' (North Bali 2009). In a similar vein, and coupled with Dolar's disbelief that someone like Prabu Peteng Dedet could have been 'chosen' to be king, this Cedil-turned-king may not be who he seems to be. And if Cedil's speech defied interpretation, in the sense that looking for the meaning of his words would be futile, what would this imply for the speeches of the people he represented?

Dewa Agung Cedil is a person in a position to command respect, but without deserving it. In my interview with Suanda, in reference to the temple priest (*pamangku*) who told me TV crews should not record temple performances like *Calonarang* (cross-ref. 22), Suanda said that there are five kinds of people in Bali: 'people who are respected, people who understand, people who appreciate, people who know a lot, and people who don't know anything. His [the *pamangku*'s] answer is here [people who are respected]. But what does he know?' (Interview 27/07/2012).¹⁶³ Indeed, Dewa Agung Cedil does not seem to know anything either. So, the performers seemed to be asking, why should he be respected?

Dewa Agung Cedil's incompetence became even clearer in the wheelchair incident described above. On one level, in trying to understand what this performance was about and what it was trying to do, I take Cedil's transformation as an obvious reversal that generated much laughter because of the inferred absurdity of a king serving his servants. However, this may be significant on another level as well: court and literary uses of the word *linggih* refer to a seat, but in everyday usage, as in asking about someone's *linggih* in a formal context (given its refined register), refers to having a status, a social position. This 'elected' king is obviously incompetent and unfit for his position, literally unable to sit in it.

Is this Cedil playing a king, though, or did Cedil actually *become* a king (*Cedil dadi ratu*)? Asked about this, Suanda noted: 'It is the king who has become Cedil. I am no king'

¹⁶³ See Appendix A, note 9.5.

(Interview 27/07/2012).¹⁶⁴ In a reversal of the Javanese saying, ‘Petruk became king’ (*‘Petruk dadi ratu’* —borrowed from the *Wayang* play about Petruk, the clown-servant who became king mentioned above), which is used to refer to ‘somebody who does not deserve a top position in an organization’ (Basuki 2006: 81), this time it is the king who has become a clown, or a servant (of whom?). This seems to be saying a number of things: people with power in Bali are dependent on media (see the microphone dance). They get words backwards (Dolar becomes Lardo), or twist language to their own whims. Unworthy, ridiculous people can ascend to power and be in a position to give commands, without necessarily being able to command respect.

In many ways, Cedil seems to be the actualization of Geertz’s idea of the king, or, as Hobart put it in his critique of Geertz’s view of kingship, of the king-as-cabbage (Hobart 2000: 237; cross-ref. 104-105). Cedil’s transformation into a king could amount to a carefully nuanced social and political critique. However, all of my interlocutors (Ayu, Suanda, the family in Bona, even some of the ISI academics with whom I discussed this, as I shall argue later in the chapter), although clear that this was criticism, were reluctant to point fingers or be specific on what or whom this criticism was about (see above Suanda’s deference to ‘something he read’ and the fact that the critic himself ‘did not know’ he was being critical). The context of the performance would conceivably allow people to at least suspect who the target of criticism might be. However, it is understandable that few people would go on record to a researcher and admit so. In addition, there may be more to this than reluctance: the whole point of indirectness is that it leaves one’s target implicit. What is performed allows different audiences to think of different but equally suitable subjects. For Suanda to specify in interview what his target was would undermine what the indirectness is for.

Prompted further, however, Suanda remarked:

¹⁶⁴ See Appendix A, note 9.6.

As a *bondrés* actor, you need to know a lot: music, dance, the situation. This is the difficulty: words, once they get out, they can't be erased. If you dance, you can make a mistake and most people won't know. They may see, but they might not know. If you speak, the words are weapons. Your speech is your tiger. You can say something, and someone can die. People can cause harm if they say something that is not good. Someone may die. Now, in politics. I see politics in Indonesia, and I say wow. Wow. This is great. I pick up on some of that. *But if I perform at a government event, I only need say a little, and people already ...* [he claps]. Just a little bit, not too much. If I say too much, then I will be taken [he crossed his arms, as if in handcuffs]. It's like fried rice; only a little bit of hot sauce is enough (Interview 27/07/2012; my emphasis).¹⁶⁵

Suanda's failure to complete the highlighted sentence above is proper. It is arrogant to spell everything out. In addition, it becomes clear that social and political criticism in contemporary Bali is not without consequences—and although Cedil's speech is no tiger, Suanda's might be.

Furthermore, Suanda described his relationship with the audience, whether it is government officials or farmers, as a 'war,' and remarked that 'before a performance, I need a lot of ammunition' (Interview 27/07/2012).¹⁶⁶ There is, then, a sense that more is left out than what is said when it comes to performances like *Drama Gong*. What is the significance of these silences? In addition, it is evident that the multiple layers of reversal at play can be appreciated only through prior familiarity with Cedil and the other characters. The family in Bona, for instance, was familiar with Cedil's usual appearance and character; otherwise his transformation would not have made sense. They were also constantly pitting this performance against a series of other experiences—from live performances, to television, from radio plays and hearsay:

Ketut: Sometimes there are *Drama Gong* groups that have already existed for a long time, well-known, the acting is good. For example, *Bintang Bali Timur*; wherever

¹⁶⁵ See Appendix A, note 9.7.

¹⁶⁶ See Appendix A, note 9.8.

they were, people who liked *Drama Gong* would come.

Gèk: I still like to hear to them. Because our neighbour has a cassette.

Ketut: But this is sound only.

Gèk: I listen to it. He has a cassette, he puts it on, I listen from here. I like it. It is well known.

Ketut: Like the piece we just watched [the episode with Cedil in *Cupak Pengeng*]: the characters are good, the acting is good. But now there are groups that do *Drama Gong* for only one time and then it is over. Some time ago there was a ceremony in Bona, the children put on a *Drama Gong* for one time only. They made jokes. The famous *Drama Gong* from before ...

Gèk: Lodra was his name.

Ketut: The one who became king. His name was Lodra.

Gèk: He played the young king. He had a good voice.

Self: What is 'good acting'?

Ketut: Sometimes their voice... Like in films, or *Sinétron*,¹⁶⁷ there are old actors with new actors and sometimes it is forced, sometimes the dialogue doesn't flow. Like they are still trying to remember. He is still memorizing. If there's only professionals, they already know. If he is new, he waits... like he is thinking 'Now what do I say?'

Gèk: Lodra was well known, the *Bintang Bali Timur*. I still like it (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).¹⁶⁸

The acting in all of the performances we watched was compared to the performances of *Bintang Bali Timur*, so these were used as a standard against which all other actors were judged and evaluated. The cassette that Gèk referred to is part of an extremely popular set of tapes, released in 1980, some productions of which 'may have sold as many as a half-million

¹⁶⁷ *Sinétron*, from *sinéma életronik*, can refer to a variety of TV series, from loosely historical serials (drawing from the Indian epics and Chinese mythology) to soap operas. For a discussion of *sinétron* and how audiences may engage with such programmes, see Hobart 2014b.

¹⁶⁸ See Appendix A, note 9.9.

sets of cassettes. It was played and played again on *bemos* (jitneys) and in work places, coffee stalls, and house yards for years after it was first released. The performers became celebrities all over South Bali, and expressions from the play became commonplaces in Balinese everyday discourse' (deBoer 1996: 171). Apparently, some of these tapes were still being played in Bali in 2012. However, what I find important here is that this process of judging the present in comparison to the past when it comes to performance standards is precisely what happens in performances themselves: contemporary Bali is being pitted against traditional Bali. The past is used as a yardstick or a set of criteria by which to comment critically on the present. At the same time, Balinese spectators are constantly referring back (I hesitate to say 're-interpret' because of the problems posed by the idea of 'interpretation' as outlined earlier) from the present to how the past was supposed to be in a process of self-reflexive anachronism (for other examples see also Emigh 1996: 183; Hobart 2000: 229, 264; Fox 2011: 218-264). So what happens when the convention of 'traditional Bali' standing in for contemporary Bali is stretched to its limits and ultimately broken?

Excerpt B¹⁶⁹

At the beginning of a distinct bondrés episode incorporated within the Cupak Pengeng performance, Sangar (Figure 7), a red-faced character with a cowbell necklace, an 'I <heart> Bali' T-shirt and an animal print vest, a cross between a 'traditionally dressed' Balinese farmer and a modern, low-class Balinese man, comes on stage and addresses the audience directly, starting by flattering Klungkung, where the performance is taking place.

Sangar: Cultured Klungkung, pleasant Klungkung, holy Klungkung. *Om swastyastu*¹⁷⁰ Klungkung! [...] Eh, now is the modern times, the world has advanced, the Klungkung bypass is already completed, there is no more sickness because of poverty. Now there are rich

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix A, note 9.10.

¹⁷⁰ *Om swastyastu* is a formal Balinese greeting. Although it used to be reserved for religious occasions, in recent years it has become common on a broader range of occasions (for instance, when answering the phone). For more details see Fox 2011: 63, 91-98.

illnesses. You know these poverty illnesses, like mange (*kerék*). Crusted with foulness, ringworms, these are illnesses of the poor. Klungkung now is advanced beyond the afflictions of the poor, now there are rich illnesses. Stroke, liver, kidneys. You see what my face looks like; I am ashamed to have a poor illness. I have diabetes, sir. Do you know diabetes (*kencing manis*)? Every time I see something sweet, I pee (*mengencingi*).¹⁷¹ Klungkung is an area with history, clap your hands for Klungkung. Just now I asked where are we dancing? When I was told it was Klungkung, I was scared, sir. Excuse me. My lips are from Bulèlèng.¹⁷² I am from Karangasem. I was married in Bulèlèng. I stay in Gianyar. I am a mixed person. I am not used to the elevated language. [...]

After the excerpt above, Sangar proceeded to explain the vast potential for misunderstandings and laughs that comes from the fact that the same or similar words can mean something different, or be in completely different registers, and therefore potentially insulting, in different areas of Bali. He concluded that Bali had the concept of ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ [cross-ref. 161, 202] long before the Independence of Indonesia in 1945, and that ‘in Bali we have different languages in the different regencies, but they become one in Bali.’ Then he presented different examples of misunderstandings, usually involving sex or scat.

Later, Sangar and his friend Senger (Figure 8), a character with a mouth deformity that made his speech almost indistinct, acted out a Calonarang play [cross-ref. 22] by taking on the roles of Rangda and her lover. In this play-within-a-play, Senger informed, in the role of narrator, that the temple priest (Jéro Mangku) arrived and said that the deity did not want to dance [cross-ref. 226-227] unless they purified the space. Once they did, Sokir (Figure 9), another servant-turned-ruler, now playing minister Pak Agung, came on stage, seeking to claim the Princess of Kediri. Pak Agung’s high-pitched voice elicited Sangar’s instruction on how to speak properly in order to become a king: ‘A king must be commanding. His speech must have power.’¹⁷³ Soon after, Pak Agung asked for a chair, and three men carried in a throne with an attached Indonesian flag. Pak Agung,

¹⁷¹ Here, Ayu, my Balinese language teacher, commented that this is ‘language with skin’ (*‘basa yang berkulit/makulit’*), which has a hidden meaning, in this case sexual. ‘Something sweet’ (*‘né manis manis’*) refers to women.

¹⁷² This indicates that this character’s language is *kasar*, vulgar, and therefore not fit for Klungkung, which has a reputation for using refined Balinese, even for everyday conversation. However, coupled with the social criticism that follows, this may also indicate the position from which this character applies his critique. He then proceeded to say that he is from Karangasem—one of the poorest areas in Bali. Dibia, in a discussion about this performance at the Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI) remarked: ‘This is a person that associates widely. It is the “global Balinese.” He has friends everywhere’ (Group discussion 29/2/2012; see Appendix A, note 9.11).

¹⁷³ *‘Raja harus mawibawa. Ngomong harus power.’*

was utterly unable to sit on this throne. Senger, however, used a ladder and managed it just fine.

Sokir in this passage blurred once more the lines between the make-believe (the play within the play) and its framework (the ‘modern times’ in which the performer earlier addressed the audience directly). This scene also continued the theme that had been introduced earlier: the proper way for a ruler to speak and behave. However, in a discussion of this extract with performance academics at ISI Denpasar, on 29/02/2012, organized by Professor Dibia at my request, my interlocutors chose to focus on different elements of the performance. Here my comments about well-informed informants in the Methods section of Chapter Two are relevant (cross-ref. 76). The discussion at ISI may be more useful in what it revealed about the ways people comment, discuss, and argue (or avoid argument) in different roles, than in what was actually said about the performance. This may be one of the ways in which Foucault’s idea of interpreting the interpreter (1990: 66) is relevant to this study.

Professor Dibia was the first to speak.

Dibia: If we only watch this part, the *bondrés*, we don’t know we are watching *Cupak*. It is funny indeed. But there are several jokes, several elements that are not good, in an ethical way. One is the pornographic, one also involves the abuse of religious elements. This, according to me, is not good.¹⁷⁴ But as entertainment, it is indeed funny (ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).¹⁷⁵

Dibia also remarked on the actors’ over-reliance on make-up, which he compared to a mask, and costume in order to be funny, unlike the early forms of *Drama Gong*, when no elaborate costumes or masks were used. Gusti Ngurah Sudibya, a high-caste choreographer and ISI professor, agreed with Dibia and added:

Sudibya: From the title, *Cupak Pengeng*, I thought it would be high humour. But I agree with Pak Dibia. First, this is rather

¹⁷⁴ At this point, I remarked that what we watched had already been censored in order to be broadcast. The group laughed, but did not comment.

¹⁷⁵ See Appendix A, note 9.12.

ruined. Second, the costumes are too sloppy and without concept. This is modern, there is a tiger print, it's mixed. Their dialogue is indeed good. But these jokes are not related to the theme of *Cupak* (ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).¹⁷⁶

However, only two of the commentators, Ketut Suteja (an ISI lecturer) and Gusti Agung Ayu Oka Partini (a high-caste ISI Professor), mentioned the potential of the performance for social and political critique:

Suteja: I feel that all the comic numbers in Bali are different now. This has an identity, they want to show something strange. So they show something like this [he refers to Senger's mouth deformity]. Their purpose is to attract the audience's attention, and so they can be identified wherever they perform. Like Cedil, for instance. [...] As far as the theme is concerned, they often deliver something of critical nature. A critique that has to do with the state of the community. Maybe the audience want entertainment only, but according to them, the community is expected to understand how to behave (ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).¹⁷⁷

Partini: I think that what that first performer said, all this has to do with the situation in the community. What the situation is like. For instance sometimes he referred to issues with women, sometimes to the issue of corruption, sometimes to issues related to religion. This is usually perhaps a parody (ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).¹⁷⁸

However, the discussion quickly focused on the performance's unruliness towards its own storyline, as *Cupak* was not mentioned or involved in any way in what was happening on stage for a very large part of the performance, which blatantly disregarded the 'recommended structure' for *Drama Gong* (Dyah Kustiyanti, ISI discussion 29/02/2012). What is involved in this disapproval?

Articulating Performance

¹⁷⁶ See Appendix A, note 9.13.

¹⁷⁷ See Appendix A, note 9.14.

¹⁷⁸ See Appendix A, note 9.15.

It is unclear whence *Drama Gong*'s proper 'structure' originates. However, the emphasis placed on this became evident in the context of the 2012 Bali Arts Festival, where committees consisting of ISI academics and other experts supervised and scored the performances on how well they conformed. According to TVRI producer Anak Agung Istri Suryani (discussion during a *Drama Gong* shooting at the Arts Festival, 15/06/2012), *Drama Gong* performances at the Bali Arts Festival, as part of a judged showcase or competition (*parade*), needed to follow a prescribed 'traditional' structure (again, its origin was rather vague), which consists of four 'episodes': introduction, conflict, development, and solution.¹⁷⁹ These are only sprinkled with jokes, usually at the beginning of episodes, delivered by the high-status characters' pair of servants or followers (*panasar*), who are thus necessarily directly linked to the main story. Outside the Arts Festival context, however, and this was the case in *Cupak Pengeng*, the performers could keep only the parts they wanted, in any order, while the *bondrés* need not have any connection to the 'plot.'

There seems to be, then, a tendency for institutions such as ISI and the Arts Festival to standardize Balinese performance, while the increasingly doctrinaire judgments of experts come in contrast to actual performance practices. Fox suggested a similar process in relation to the introductory dances in *Topèng* performances (cross-ref. 214), the style and succession of which is now more-or-less rigid, with rare deviations: 'Although this is now a fairly widespread standard, the masks used for these opening dances have varied in the past from one place and time to another. There is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that the growing tendency toward regularization has been driven largely by the arts academy in Denpasar'

¹⁷⁹ This seems to mirror *Lègong*'s formal structure, which consists of the *papeson* (entrance), *pangawak* (main part), *pangecet* (elaboration), sometimes *pangipuk* (literally 'sweet talk,' so reconciliation), and *pakaad* (ending) (Dibia and Ballinger 2004: 77).

(2011: 266). Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to talk about the ISI-ization, or indeed the ‘*Singapaduisasi*’¹⁸⁰ of Balinese performance.

However, this apparent tendency to control *Drama Gong* in particular is not surprising if one considers the conditions under which the genre came about. *Drama Gong* was developed in the late 1960s under Suharto’s New Order Regime. According to deBoer, as many of Bali’s best performers were killed in the 1965-66 events, precisely because of their ability to criticize the regime from the stage, *Drama Gong* was created by Anak Agung Gede Raka Prayadnya of Gianyar in response to the ‘shortage of talent for some of the technically more demanding theatrical forms’ (1996: 165). *Drama Gong* was demotic, a people’s theatre—as against the much more aristocratic forms of *Arja* or *Topèng*.

The new genre soon attracted the interest of KOKAR,¹⁸¹ and ‘was taken to heart by the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), which sponsored the first island-wide *drama gong* festival in 1968. But sponsorship of such festivals soon devolved to governmental organization’ (deBoer 1996: 165-66). In addition, ‘the potential of the form for dissemination of information and propaganda was by no means overlooked’ (deBoer 1996: 169). What is surprising, then, is not the attempt to control *Drama Gong* now, since that had already been the case from its inception, but the performers’ ability to subvert¹⁸² these constrictions and achieve a remarkable level of ambiguity in practice: the same performance may include both a play on class, a potential critique of people in power and their flirtation with rhetoric and the media, and a reaffirmation of ‘official’ values that still remain from the early days of the New Order regime, such as the idea of Unity in Diversity (cross-ref. Extract B).

¹⁸⁰ Hobart uses the term *Singapaduisasi* or Singapaduization to refer to the increasing role of Singapadu in defining the standard for performing arts in Bali (Personal communication 09/03/2014).

¹⁸¹ Konservatori Karawitan (KOKAR) Indonesia was a government-sponsored high school of performing arts, formerly based in Denpasar. It is now called SMKI, Sekolah Menengah Karawitan Indonesia, and based in Batubulan.

¹⁸² This was a standard theme in Eastern European performance under the Soviets. See Chadaga 2011 and Innes 1997: 382.

The control exerted over Balinese performance by institutions such as ISI and the Arts Festival is, as argued in Chapter Seven, of a different nature now and has different goals. However, Suanda remarked that actors are still conscious of the amount of ‘criticism’ that they can incorporate into their performance, and commented that when performing, for instance ‘at a temple, it is unconstrained, because the community at the temple is free,’ whereas ‘at the PKB you have to follow the [year’s] motto’ (Interview 27/07/2012)¹⁸³ and to reflect, or possibly elaborate, on its specific ideological and philosophical ramifications.¹⁸⁴ So what were the Arts Festival mottos in 2011 and 2012,¹⁸⁵ and how did they shape, at least in part, the performances that took place during the festival? What dialogues were these performances a part of?

Articulating Bali

In 2011, the motto or theme of the Arts Festival was *Désa Kala Patra* (‘place, time, circumstance’),¹⁸⁶ with the subtitle *Adaptasi Diri Dalam Multikultur* (‘Self-Adaptation into the Multicultural’), focusing on Balinese ‘adaptation’ in a multicultural age, with the Indonesian subtitle putting a progressive or liberal spin on the Balinese idea of the importance of context. In 2012, the theme was *Paras-Paros (Dinamika Dalam Kebersamaan)*, which focused on the ‘dynamics of togetherness,’ in effect echoing the Indonesian national ideal of ‘Unity in Diversity’ (cross-ref. Extract B of *Cupak Pengeng*). The Indonesian subtitles of the Balinese phrases that make up the Arts Festival themes are not translations; rather they inflect the Balinese in various ways. The phrase *Paras-Paros*

¹⁸³ See Appendix A, note 9.16.

¹⁸⁴ There is an interesting parallel here with the way Deleuze described what he called ‘societies of control,’ which ‘are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies. “Control” is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future’ (1992: 4). Control seems to be much more insidious than discipline. The potential repercussions of dissent remain vague, and yet there is no doubt in Suanda’s account that one must ‘follow the motto’ on which the organizers of the Arts Festival have decided.

¹⁸⁵ Although I researched the Arts Festival for both years of my fieldwork (2011-2012), I had only just arrived for the first, so my materials draw more heavily on the second.

¹⁸⁶ According to Gusti Ngurah Bagus, the phrase *Désa Kala Patra* was itself invented in the 1950s (Mark Hobart, personal communication 09/03/2014).

carries connotations of reciprocity and exchange, which the Indonesian gloss does not convey. *Paras-paros* is similar to the Javanese phrase *gotong royong*, which is also in widespread use elsewhere in Indonesia, including, until recently, Bali. Does the increasing popularity of *Paras-Paros* in favour of *gotong royong* indicate a Balinese tendency to self-distance from Java? Might there be more in the way of an antagonism between the glossing over and delimitation of possible interpretations of the Balinese phrases and their usage prior to the Arts Festival, or a tension in the differing expectations of the centre (Indonesian) from the periphery (Balinese), and *vice versa*?

In 2012, the official stance towards and interpretation of the theme of the Arts Festival was clear from the outset, as it was presented by the Governor of Bali Madé Mangku Pastika and the President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono during the opening ceremonies of the Festival:

In keeping with the theme of the Bali Arts Festival 34, *Paras-Paros*, which means dynamics in togetherness, the opening parade will present the potential, the richness, and the dynamic of development of the arts and diversity of the arts of the archipelago (Pastika, PKB 10/06/2012).¹⁸⁷

Dynamics and togetherness become two keywords that can encourage the creation of creative ideas. This theme can refresh the identity, cause the blossoming of creativity and maintain the conduct and aesthetics in the cultivation of artworks. This theme also gives inspiration for strengthening the unity of the sense of togetherness and tolerance that is relevant to our joint effort in order to build order in a more civilized life. An order in life which is based on peace, brotherhood and harmony between groups of communities but also between the nations (Yudhoyono, PKB 10/06/2012).¹⁸⁸

Notions of ‘community’ and ‘nation’ seem to exemplify Laclau’s ‘empty signifiers’ (2005: 102-07) both in their ambivalence and in their importance to politics: ‘The presence of empty signifiers [...] is the very condition of hegemony’ (Laclau 1996: 43) in that, by attaching a

¹⁸⁷ See Appendix A, note 9.17.

¹⁸⁸ See Appendix A, note 9.18.

particular content to a totality that is otherwise absent, they make hegemonic relationships possible.

The President of Indonesia then went on to remark on the performances that the gathered audience would enjoy during the festival:

The series of events of the Bali Arts Festival also constitute the means to build a national culture that is very important in addressing the challenges of today's civilization. The Bali Arts Festival can become a fort for the strengthening of philosophy, values and creativity in the arts, that remain firmly planted in the roots of tradition. The roots of tradition stem from the refinement of the mind and values of the Balinese community, which is religious. I often say that the Bali Arts Festival constitutes a vehicle for the creativity and innovation by Balinese artists to be presented not only to the Balinese community but also to the global community. It is hoped that the Bali Arts Festival will become a window of information, a bridge of communication between cultures, as well as a relationship of cultural diplomacy between countries. In connection to the efforts to further introduce the richness of culture to the world, we should all be proud (Yudhoyono, PKB 10/06/2012).¹⁸⁹

Remarkably little has changed since Tri Sutrisno, the then Vice President of Indonesia, opened the 1996 Arts Festival with a similar speech,¹⁹⁰ which focused on the same concepts

¹⁸⁹ See Appendix A, note 9.19. It is worth noting here that, according to I Ketut Suastika, Head of the Department of Culture, Bali Province (*Kepala Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali*), many of the points used in the presidential speech were provided by the Arts Section (*Bidang Kesenian*) of their Bali-based Department. After an initial communication between the President's secretary and the Bali-based Arts Section, the Governor of Bali was invited to a meeting with the President in Jakarta, in which they discussed the speech as necessary. Suastika stated that approximately 80% of the points provided were used in the speech (Personal communication 15/08/2014; I owe thanks to I Nyoman Darma Putra for mediating). The relationship between the central and provincial governments in articulating the official account of Bali and Balinese culture, and the ways this has changed, or not, over the years, may be a fruitful area for further research.

¹⁹⁰ 'After a brief prayer to Divinity, the Vice-President welcomed all participants from overseas and urged them to use the opportunity of being in the beautiful island of Bali not only to introduce their own cultural arts (*seni budaya*) but also to become acquainted with Balinese and Indonesian social life, and the diversity of their cultural customs (*adat budaya*), the beauty of the natural panorama, the variety of flora and fauna. The Arts Festival, he said, was an occasion for friendship and co-operation, which was increasingly necessary in an era of economic and informational globalization.

The Arts Festival is one way to construct and develop Balinese cultural arts (seni budaya) and simultaneously a means to promoting tourism. It was also a means of pushing artists to become more creative. So the theme of this Arts Festival was the realization of the national spirit, because in an era of global competition, the country needed to increase society's enthusiasm to develop and improve on the past. *Included in development are the nation's arts and culture so as to possess competitive capacity and the highest possible cultural endurance. Ladies and Gentlemen, art is part of the culture (budaya) and civilization of human beings, which is closely connected to creativity, to the will and work striving to the realization of a standard of living, which is better, more orderly and of a higher quality.*

He then gave a long account explaining how the arts festival encouraged creativity, productivity and innovation. The production of arts and crafts had great scope for entrepreneurial development (dwelt on at

of European origin: creativity, tradition, philosophy (with the occasional Arabic exception, like *masyarakat*). Here, culture is still ‘a key part of the national development effort,’ ‘a treasured tourist asset [...and] integral to, and partly constitutive of, the disciplined development of the national spirit (remember the New Order was run by the military)’ (Hobart 2000: 36). This places the 2012 addresses excerpted above in a long tradition of classical speeches along New Order lines, which can be examined as a genre of monologic prescription of being Balinese in contemporary Indonesia. However, it may be worth examining how Balinese engaged with the Arts Festival themes in practice.

Paras-Paros in Practice

Dibia was a member of the committee responsible for the selection of performances for the programme of the festival. His answer to my question about how the Arts Festival themes are incorporated into the performances selected for the festival was even more telling:¹⁹¹

Dibia: How the themes of the festival are elaborated or transformed into every programme or story featured in the performance. This year we’ve been able to bring the focus on the theme, to make every group really concentrate on this theme. If necessary they have to really create a story that speaks about *Paras-Paros*, ‘willing to live together,’ or ‘keeping the life in harmony.’ Because *Paras-Paros* is ‘we are different but always together.’¹⁹²

Self: How did you manage to make everyone be so focused on the theme?

Dibia: We had several meetings with representatives of the different districts and cities to give them some kind of workshop and how to sharpen the message of the story in order to respond to that theme. For example, the story of [the] *Arja* [from] Singapadu, that story is not about war,

length), but artists were also part of the nation’s intellectual wealth, whose work should be protected by copyright. Art promoted health and reduced stress and was an important part of a flourishing nation’ (Hobart 2000: 36-37).

¹⁹¹ As I mentioned earlier, this discussion took place in English, at Dibia’s insistence.

¹⁹² This echoes the Unity in Diversity motto quite strongly.

it's not about fighting but it was splitting two brothers, Raden Praditya, the younger, and Jaya Pramada, the older.

Pramada is a little bit arrogant, and Praditya is a little bit humble. They are brothers, not twins, but when still young they got split because of a typhoon. When the king was about to give them a weapon as a symbol of power, they both got split. Pramada got the sheath of the kris, and Praditya got the blade. And they got separated—Pramada still at home, and Praditya wandering from place to place. So when they come to a place called Tunjun Biru where there was a beautiful princess and her mother, Praditya meets Asmarawati, the princess of Tunjun Biru. They fall in love. Of course when the mother arrives, she tries to stop them, because the mother already promised her to Jaya Pramada. But when the time comes when they have romance in the garden, the mother found them and for some reason the mother cursed Praditya [to turn] into a monkey. And of course the monkey tries to protect Asmarawati from getting close to Jaya Pramada. But when Jaya Pramada got really angry at the monkey, he tries to kill him, and then Jaya Praditya emerges. So when they pull their weapons, they are surprised: 'Why do these things match? The case and the blade!' So they tell the story. 'Oh, you are my brother.' So then they all come to the same story. And Jaya Pramada says 'OK, since you are already in love with her, why don't you marry her? I am your brother, so I give my blessing to you.'

So there's no fighting actually. It's just a sense of unifying the family, to be willing to live together from different kind of spirit. So that's the kind of story we were trying to focus on. And because of that I had to read different kinds of stories and whenever I find this is not about *Paras-Paros*, I cut it.

I must say that most of the stories they are putting on now are created with a focus on *Paras-Paros*, but most ideally the activity itself should be showing the spirit of *Paras-Paros*, not just the story itself, but the spirit of the group really working together as a team. There are still stories that we kind of hear from groups that are not really preparing in a good mood. They've been forced to do so, because they've already been given some money, so they grab people from here and there, so there's no spirit of togetherness. But in general, it works. And the most touching, I think, is the performance of children *Gong Kebyar*. When they walk on stage they hold hands and cross each other, so that side stands over here [on the other side], so there is no challenge like that. For me that's the

most touching thing, and it really reflects the theme of *Paras-Paros*.¹⁹³ Before, the *Désa Kala Patra* [the theme of the previous year's PKB] was also like that but less focused. Because we were not given enough time to select the stories that represent these things. And this time I think from the opening ceremony, the parades, also show this kind of *Paras-Paros* spirit there.

Self: Apart from the theme, did you give any other guidelines to the groups as well? What they may do, what they may not do?

Dibia: Well, basically just reminding them that this time you shouldn't exploit more fighting scenes or war or battle, because that obviously is not in line with our theme. So you can use some kind of battle, but to lead to the awareness that these two things should not fight, but they should help each other. That's the only thing.

Self: And how is the selection process, which groups can present at the PKB?

Dibia: They apply, they send their proposal, their material to us, so that's about 75 packets that we receive. Maybe two months before the festival, they send information, this is what we want to perform, this is the story, and I kept selecting and giving comments, this is okay, this is not. So with my other colleagues in the team we were really able to really examine the material of the groups (Interview 04/08/2012).

There are several points here. First, Dibia took the case of one play as the exemplar. It was, additionally, a play from Singapadu, Dibia's home village, which has risen as a powerful centre of performance since the 1930s. The role of Singapadu, if anything, has become stronger in recent years in part by virtue of the positions and reputations *inter alia* of Bandem, Dibia and Kodi who all hail from there. In presenting this play as a yardstick for the evaluation of other performances on the one hand, and for the exemplification of the spirit of harmony on the other, is arguably an example of powerful synecdoche, by which a particular articulation is made to stand in for the whole of Bali and the Balinese point of view. In other

¹⁹³ How old is the preoccupation with shielding children from damaging influences like sex and violence that comes across in this scene? Further research would be required to establish whether this is an imported sentimentality that was absent in earlier years.

words, this is interpretation in a classical form, by which a hegemonic, gate-keeping group determines the interpretation of a popular phrase that could potentially lead to a whole fan of meanings; it is a monologue that eliminates other possibilities of engagement. Despite the critique to the concept of interpretation and its universal applicability that I presented earlier in this chapter (cross-ref. 237-241), interpretation has now become part of how Balinese both self-discipline and control others. Quite apart from that, this particular practice of interpretation consists of reciting a narrative and then extracting from it what was the initial reason for reciting the narrative; it is, in other words, circular. In a sense, this is a case of foreshadowing: the conclusion of the narrative was pre-decided, and so the narrative was predetermined to this end.

There is, here, a sense that the notion of ‘harmony’ implicit in *Paras-Paros* as described above is the result of a systematic suppression or erasure of conflict. This, however, was not limited to the content of performances. On the one hand, if performance is a means through which Balinese can work out issues they see as pressing, then the disqualification of performances that revolve around themes of conflict equals the silencing of these matters and of the groups that are currently preoccupied with them. On the other hand, as Dibia and Wayan Geriya,¹⁹⁴ two of the principal organizers of the festival, argued, the Arts Festival is not supposed to merely showcase Balinese performance, but to foster the ideals that it represents each year:

In that context [of the Festival’s theme, *Paras-Paros*], scenes of war or violence in the performances certainly do not fit the theme this time. Therefore such things do not need to be presented in the works of art. In order for the performances to reflect the theme *Paras-Paros*, there certainly needs to be a selection.

The same issue was brought up by Wayan Geriya, that the PKB 2012 is expected to rebuild [*membangun*] the spirit of *Paras-Paros*. *If that spirit is felt to have slackened, then we try to revitalize it through the performing arts*. Thus, an atmosphere of togetherness and peace is

¹⁹⁴ Geriya, from the next door village to Singapadu, is a Balinese anthropologist and scholar of tourism, and a professor at Udayana University.

constantly built. *Art is a universal language that can penetrate political and economical barriers.* ‘Through the arts we are able to elevate human dignity,’ say Dibia and Geriya (*The Bali Post* 2011; my emphases).¹⁹⁵

A closer look at some of the statements above, and the presuppositions on which they are based, may prove telling. In the passive construction of the first highlighted sentence, the exnominated authorities over Balinese life elect to strengthen the essence of togetherness through a functionalist use of performance, while the term *membangun* (build) is intrinsic to the New Order language of development (Noszlopy 2002: 201). In the second, as in Barba’s approach earlier (cross-ref. Chapter Six), art is represented as a universal language, in what I take to be a euphemism for globalized capitalism.

The idea of *Paras-Paros* seems to have gained currency after the 2012 Arts Festival. In 2014, considering the history of conflicts that arise prior to elections, political party representatives invoked the principle of *Paras-Paros* as a guarantor of their intention to hold a ‘peaceful, honest and fair 2014 election’ in Bali, while ‘maintaining [the] unity, harmony, order, security and peace of the Balinese people’ (*The Bali Times* 2014; see also Erviani 2014). It is interesting that the prevention of conflict rested on a public declaration and the signing of a written agreement, in that it makes explicit the ways in which authoritative articulation aims to silence alternative accounts, to erase antagonisms by making their articulation impossible because they do not fit the official narrative. This reflects a clear trend in the Dibia and Geriya argument I presented above, which hinges on the rigid control of interpretation over both the narratives and their official interpretation. But how are these notions explored in performance?

Gusti Lanan, an actor, when talking about the ways in which he creates his masked characters, gave the example of the *Topèng Tamu*, a tourist character,¹⁹⁶ who said in an

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix A, note 9.20.

¹⁹⁶ Balinese may refer to tourists using either the term *tamu*, guest, or the English-derived *touris*. *Tamu* is usually considered more respectful, less blatantly cognizant of the economic, and sometimes power-related,

Americanized Indonesian accent: ‘*Saya senang di Bali!* [I like Bali!] [Then, in English:] I am impressed with Bali, because Bali is so peaceful!’ (Interview 20/05/2012). This is a standard line for the representation of foreign characters in contemporary Balinese performance, who tend to marvel at how peaceful Bali is,¹⁹⁷ when the rest of the characters are engaged in several different kinds of conflict (power, social status, romantic endeavours, and physical violence, among others) as in *Cupak Pengeng*. What should one infer from this perfect overlap between the, fairly repetitive, official speeches on peace and harmony (i.e. the executive decision to be peaceful, and the co-opting of the language of reciprocity and exchange into an innocuous version of togetherness), and the lines of tourists being made fun of in performance?

Suanda made clear earlier (cross-ref. 253) that there are limitations to how far a theme can be bent through a performer’s abilities. However, what is also striking in the tight control over narrative that I described above is the sheer absence of consideration of how spectators engage with performance. Suanda remarked on this absence when I asked him about how notions of togetherness, diversity, and creativity are reflected in performance practices:

Togetherness. This is not a funny subject. This subject is good for speeches. What is this togetherness? I need to read a lot, then work together with my friends to come up with jokes, and also look at the audience. The audience is very important. [...] Because every occasion is different. The spectators are different. We can prepare the concept at home, but every audience is different. Something can be funny here, but not funny there. Sometimes, I come on stage, and

implications of the relationship. However, its use can also have ironic overtones, when it indicates precisely a stark awareness of the relationship between tourists and Balinese, as, I think, is the case here.

¹⁹⁷ The idea of peaceful Bali is readily falsified by the presence of Balinese militia called *pecalang*, which have largely taken over the maintenance of public order and in many ways effectively control the island. Their establishment ‘ostensibly aimed at protecting village communities from “external” threats. This kind of neo-traditional village militia was first employed to provide protection to Megawati’s party, the PDI-P, when it held its congress on Bali in October 1998. It was not long, however, before *pecalang* became identified less with party politics and more with the control of non-Balinese migrants. Their role as a communal security force even became officially sanctioned in March 2001 [...]. According to this regulation, the *pecalang* have the authority to ensure law and order in matters of “tradition” (*adat*) and “religion” (*agama*)’ (Picard 2008: 105). For more information about *pecalang* and the related idea of *Ajeg Bali* (‘Bali erect’) see Darling 2003, MacDougall 2003, Widnyani and Widia 2003, and Fox 2011.

people don't get it. Sometimes as soon as I come out, people understand. So they laugh (Interview 27/07/2012).¹⁹⁸

Suanda thus stressed the importance of circumstances and context in turning a theme 'good for speeches,' i.e. an easy, if hardly discrete, carrier of agendas, into something with performative potential. This is directly opposed to the top-down control model implied by Dibia and Geriya, where context is to be bent to prescription and proscription. Arguably, Suanda's approach may be a direct attack on monologues such as the ones surrounding ideas like togetherness. Suanda seemed to suggest here that these are good only for speechifying. He then switched register to explain the contextually sensitive nature of a Balinese performance, which should be dialogic, and so incompatible with such monologues. There is a striking antagonism between the Dibia-Geriya's and Suanda's accounts, which go to quite different ways of representing oneself. In invoking the ways in which spectators can alter or even determine the performance, Suanda referred to an idea of audiences fundamentally opposed to the one implied in Dibia's account, in which audiences are represented as children to be led toward the pre-determined interpretation and correct meaning of the performance (cross-ref. 203-204). Here, Suanda referred to audiences as situated practices, which challenges the monologic representation of Bali and Balinese performance that Dibia and Geriya are engaged in.

However, Dibia's and Geriya's positions do not overlap completely and so should not be conflated. Dibia and most of the practitioner-academics of Bali, such as Bandem, Catra, and Sedana, as well as Kodi to a lesser extent, have made careers in no small part by being brokers, translators, and at times sole distributors of expert knowledge of Bali to international audiences and academics. So they are faced with a three-sided antagonism: as performers with academic credentials, Dibia *et al* have at once to be good performers, academics, and civil servants or cultural interpreters of Bali. So when Dibia, to use the example of the *Bali*

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix A, note 9.21.

Post article I quoted above, is writing together with Geriya, he needs to emphasize the third role, while when in performance or in class, his predicament is markedly different. Geriya's position, on the other hand, is much more straightforward, as the main conflict a Balinese anthropologist has to face is between being an independent academic and a civil servant, which Geriya has chosen to resolve by assuming the authoritative voice of Bali and Balinese culture, not insignificantly *via* the medium of the Arts Festival.

An additional point that the antagonism I outlined above brings to the fore is that there are two distinct versions of interpretation: on the one hand, interpretation as an analytical concept by which to control a narrative (and so interpretation as a hegemonic practice); on the other, interpreting as a local practice of self-performance. The first closes down, limits the possibilities of engagement by pre-determining the meaning of the narrative, which it turns into a monologue. The second engages in a dialogue between the constructed subject positions of the official account of what Bali and Balinese are, and the ways in which Balinese discuss, question, or outright reject these in practice.

Taylor argued that 'our self-interpretations are partly constitutive of our experience' (1977: 127). However, 'to assert this connection is not to put forward a causal hypothesis: it is not to say that we alter our descriptions and then *as a result* our experience of our predicament alters. Rather it is that certain modes of experience are not possible without certain self-descriptions' (Taylor 1985 [1977]: 127). What emerges from the accounts of the authoritative articulators of Bali (ISI academics, the Governor, The President of Indonesia, Dibia and Geriya) is an attempt to articulate Balinese performance in a certain way, one that erases conflict and aims to give the semblance of harmony, through the exclusion of those works that deal with issues of war and violence, and the erasure of these issues from the performances that are selected and promoted. So performance seems here to shift from a way through which conflicts are worked out and reflected upon to a means for erasing and

silencing such conflicts. However, the success of these attempts should not be taken for granted. Taylor's notion of the modern subject, of conflicting motives and drives, or 'cross-pressures' (1989), is strikingly absent from the official account. Perhaps one should also consider the possibility that perhaps part of the popularity of Suanda's and other such performances is precisely due to the ways in which they distance themselves from the official line without ever needing to say so outright. So the question is: what is the interpreting subject (both actor and spectator) in Suanda's, and other less official accounts?

Conclusion: What is the Point of Speaking?

The ISI academics' insistence on discipline and regulation brings to the fore the efficacy of criticism and commentary. *Cupak Pengeng* touched on a number of themes and questions: Who are the kings now? What is their relationship with power? What is class difference, how is it talked about and how does it relate to one's social and political position? And finally, what is it to be Balinese, what is it to be human, what is a good or sensible way to behave and what kind of trouble can one get into if they do not? In other words, through the juxtaposition of traditional with modern Bali and the tensions it creates, Balinese represent themselves to themselves. However, they do so in quite different ways depending on the context and circumstances in which these representations take place, and on the role one is called to play on different occasions.

This thesis has been about the representations of Bali in various registers—but this, the self-representation of Balinese to Balinese, is an area that I found seriously under-researched. However, this is part of the various, potentially conflicting, arguments of what it was to be Balinese in 2012, which, as I argued in previous chapters, is implied to a degree by others. In a sense, when one of the main issues of a performance is the various questions of what a Balinese person is, does, should do, and so forth (the answers to which can very well be

contradictory and mutually-exclusive), and if the subject has no ontological priority over moments of decision or determination (Laclau 1990: 44), Balinese in performance are both playing and accomplishing themselves.

Because of the limited length and scope of international fieldwork in Bali, particularly as part of research degree programmes (cross-ref. 74), the ISI and Arts Festival version of Bali is much more prominent and much more easily accessible in the time available than the monologue-shattering comments of Suanda and Lanan. Interpretation in the first sense, then, which invites looking for meaning rather than at context, can easily become an academic confirmation of the hegemonic reading of Balinese performance, precisely because the preferred meaning (cross-ref. 55) is hinged on ignoring the context of media-related practices and on taking the producer-centric idea of audiences as the default.

This is necessarily one particular way of framing the world; as the analysis of *Cupak Pengeng* implied, the performance of status and caste provides ample room for critique and commentary that is, however, ambiguous and hard to pin down because it does not obey the rules of a pre-conceived narrative. At the same time, this critique towards kingship or authority can co-exist with the nationalist echoes of ‘Unity in Diversity’ (cross-ref. Extract B). This is commentary by enacting, in a sense—and it does not need to be coherent. What does it mean, then, to interpret such a ‘work’ and who gets to do so? If we do not take the unity of meaning for granted, then the process of interpretation emerges as something akin to ideology in Laclau’s sense, that is, an *appearance* of totality (1990: 92). The fact that the ISI group chose to focus their critique on completely different ideas than Suanda and, to some extent, the family in Bona, is also part of the *discours*, in Foucault’s sense—a violence we do to things (1981: 67). The question then is, again, one of representation: ‘One needs to consider not just, or so much, what criticism *is*, as what is *represented* as criticism or critical, and the conditions under which judgments are held to be authoritative. And the question of

what criticism is *for*, what its goals are, is generally overlooked' (Hobart 1991: 3). In addition, the issue of judgment raises question of the *cultural criteria* of judgment, which are often portrayed as universal and, as it once was argued (Kant 2007 [1790]), relatively unproblematic.

Re-framing the issue of interpretation as a practice of representing and articulating (by someone, to someone, on an occasion, for a purpose) is, therefore, crucial. Cedil's transformation into a king in *Cupak Pengeng* can only become intelligible through spectators' past experiences and prior knowledge of his otherwise marginal and ambiguous character. In addition, a variety of historical, social and political background and context (only a tiny portion of which I was privy to) is required in order to make sense and be in a position to comment on the event. However, the very act of commentary itself is, as the case of ISI, with its echoing of the 'official' stance towards the aims of the Arts Festival, suggests, a performance with particular purposes. This is further complicated by the position of most ISI academics as both government employees and practitioners. Despite the difficulties this poses for research, it does highlight the importance of role and the capacity in which people say or do the things they say and do, which evidently goes a long way beyond questions of classification or taxonomy, of trying to decide whether and to what extent 'Balinese theatre' is ritual, entertainment, or even culture. What emerges from this discussion is, to remember Suanda's war metaphor, that culture, if anything, is a site of struggle between antagonistic representations, self-censorship, clawback, and silence. Under what conditions, then, is the interpreting subject a possibility in Balinese performance-related practices?

Cedil and Sokir, with their inability to sit on their thrones and their small, inefficacious voices, are incapable of articulating anything, both on the actual level, as well as on the level of ruling by becoming 'masters of *sakti*' (H. Geertz 1994: 94) and 'articulators of worlds' (Hobart 2000: 237). They embody the Balinese attitude of '*koh ngomong*' (to hesitate, or be

ashamed to speak): what is the point in speaking if either way no one will listen (see Hobart 1999)? In *Cupak Pengeng*, opposing forces are not amicably reconciled—solutions are found in conflict. This comes in stark contrast to the Arts Festival’s effort to erase conflict in the performances that came to represent Bali in 2012, and to the layers of sameness presented in multiple media and venues (speeches, newspaper articles, discussions and interviews with foreign researchers). Cedil and Sokir, in their inability to speak, seem to be articulating the disarticulation of almost everyone by the ISI and Arts Festival monologue.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

This thesis began by introducing some of the issues attending the study of theatre and dance in Bali, and examined the ways in which questioning what is, in certain circumstances, an artificial divide between performance, Media Studies might allow one to address the object of study in an original way. Theatre has been one of the major synecdoches used to understand Bali and the Balinese character. Others are the representation of Bali as exotic or erotic; as the Other in Bateson and Mead's terms; as explicable through its religion, which was often described in theatrical terms or appreciated as theatre, and so forth. The main problem this thesis has sought to explore was the fact that, although theatre was so widely employed as an analytical concept, what the term referred to was taken as self-evident and so remained vague and underdetermined, while the scholars and practitioners invoking it refused to acknowledge the absence of a corresponding class term, appropriate designation, or expression in the Balinese language.

In addressing this problem, the thesis has had the following aims. First, I set out to examine the various ways in which both foreign and Indonesian and Balinese scholars and practitioners have represented theatre, and the presuppositions on which these representations hinged. Second, such an inquiry required investigating the extent to which these representations depended on recordings of theatre in various media, as well as considering the implications of redefining the object of study once one has recognized how widespread and inescapable mediation is. Consequently, I needed to examine these representations as practices of mediation and so to account for their contexts, purposes and outcomes. Finally, I wished to bring certain strands of British Media and Cultural Studies to bear on the study of Balinese performance, while exploring the possibilities of studying Balinese performance-related practices beyond the confines of Theatre Studies.

Given that practices and events that have been narrowly understood as theatre performances in Bali have wider significance because they have been, and continue to be, represented as exemplifying Balinese culture, the study raised broader issues of media and culture, as the criteria of judgment and explanation by which to account for the way people articulate their practices are at the core of this enquiry. It also questioned the implications, legitimacy and limitations of using certain European images and notions, such as theatre, dance, knowledge, meaning, and so forth, in order to understand other people's practices in terms that paid due attention to those of the participants.

For these reasons, and despite having focused on the seemingly narrow field of Balinese performance practices, I hope that the thesis has wider applicability, as it could potentially contribute to the re-evaluation of the issue of double discursivity in both Cultural and Media Studies as a source of unrecognized hegemony. To this end, I have questioned the transmission model of communication, which remains widely employed despite having been repeatedly criticized in various contexts. I have also attempted to contribute to developing ways of exploring how audiences are central to studies of performance- and media-related practices by focusing on relationships and contexts.

More broadly, I have invited theatre scholars and practitioners to rethink their object of study using arguments from Cultural and Media Studies, by arguing that the idea of theatre as an essence separate from issues of culture and mediation is a fantasy. So approaching the object of study as one of representations examined as situated practices, allows one to be critical about the extent to which the study of theatre hinges on recording and mediation (as everything is in effect always already mediated), and to consider the implications of mediation being constitutive of its object of study.

Finally, drawing on Laclau's concept of totalities, I attempted a critical approach to the idea of textuality in the study of performance. While acknowledging the long history of

textual interpretation that has benefited Theatre Studies in multiple ways, and recognizing the value of hermeneutical approaches, the extent to which Balinese performance-related practices seem to run counter to European ideas of text, meaning, and interpretation opens up the possibility of approaching performance in a fundamentally different way. If one started from the assumption that performance practices are radically unlike a text by any useful definition, then what other ways might there be to approach them that we have hitherto ignored precisely because we have been representing them *as* texts?

Part One: Representing As

After introducing the main problems and questions outlined above, Part One of the thesis turned to an examination of the circumstances under which Balinese theatre and dance came to be constituted (articulated, systematized, and naturalized) as an object of study by a combination of Dutch administrators, European and American scholars, Indonesian nationalists, Javanese and Balinese aristocrats, and Balinese practitioners, professors and civil servants.

Chapter Two undertook the task of establishing the major theoretical frameworks and methods suitable for the proposed research. In order to do so, it started by briefly examining the contexts of performance and the circumstances under which they happen in Bali. It then linked performance and practice by redefining performance as a summative notion for an assemblage of practices, including those of mediation and self-representation. This transformation of the object of study from an essentialized whole to an assemblage of situated practices invited drawing on the work of several theorists. First, I drew on Collingwood's metaphysical analysis that sought to identify the presuppositions on which statements about theatre depended. Second, I examined the relevance of Goodman's argument that one can only represent something *as* something else, for someone, on an

occasion, for a purpose, with an outcome (Goodman 1976: 27-31; Hobart 2008: 12-13).

Third, I also employed Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic as a way to examine the unfinalizability and open-endedness of Balinese performance. Fourth, I considered Laclau's idea of theory as a totalizing structure that attempts closure, or a 'fixation of meaning' fundamentally incompatible with Balinese performance practices, which depend on context, including the participation of spectators. This led to a discussion of different ways of imagining audiences in Theatre and Media Studies. The status, representation, and practices of audiences were used as an open-ended question, or a leitmotif that informed the entirety of the thesis—a crash-test for widely circulated, Euro-American ideas of theatre.

Having set up the theoretical framework, Chapter Three proceeded to examine early colonial representations of Balinese theatre and culture, and to explore their epistemological and ontological claims alongside the underlying presuppositions that made them possible. From the Sanskritization of Bali that sought to discover the origins of its culture in order to preserve it, to Mead and Bateson's use of recording to capture the Balinese character and Geertz's treatment of theatre as a summative notion by which to account for Balinese politics and Bali as a whole, this examination identified three major tendencies. These were the emphasis on expressions that involve light as a visual metaphor for knowledge, which brings to the fore the importance of visibility in representations of Bali and their mediation; the circularity and essentialism of arguments for preservation that rest on the idea of origins and corruption; and finally, the inclination to use Balinese theatre as a medium through which to study something else, i.e. Balinese character or politics. Geertz's study in particular gave rise to questions about the extent to which Balinese theatre has been understood and theorized through a slippage between the different uses of the word, their histories and connotations.

Having considered theatre as a metaphor or synecdoche for Bali, Chapter Four subsequently examined studies that took theatre as a positivized object. In this chapter, I

focused on studies by European and American scholars, because they set up the tone and language that was later embraced by Indonesian and Balinese scholars in investigations of Balinese theatre and dance. Moving from provincial concerns over Bali as an innocent, but at the same time exotic and erotic, generic Orient to a medium for accessing the universal essence of performance, the scholars whose work I analyzed in this chapter have taken a reified or substantialized account of culture, that is systematic, coherent, knowable and importable, while inter-cultural communication was upheld as the principle of post-WWII modernity. These accounts invariably rested on a series of related and problematic terms: culture (and so intercultural), text, code, performance, translation. After pointing out the Eurocentrism and essentialism that is involved in the employment of each of these terms, I proposed, using Laclau, to approach culture as a site, or occasions, of struggle, and so to consider the ideological implications of any attempt to misrecognize the impossibility of ultimate suturing. This suggestion goes well beyond the relatively limited case of Balinese culture and is applicable in a variety of studies focusing on cultural practices, including those usually subsumed under notions of national or regional theatre(s). Once such objects of study are re-defined as congeries of practices, it should become impossible to treat them as unified wholes or essences, and questions related to ‘what’ they are inevitably transformed into ones pertaining to the contexts in which they take place.

Chapter Five then attempted to examine what role outsiders played in the development of theatre and dance as Balinese society became increasingly oriented around tourism, and how Balinese have implicated themselves into such consumer capitalist representations and their attendant industries. Considering that the most prominent scholars and practitioners in Bali have collaborated with one of the Western scholars mentioned in Chapter Four or have been educated in the United States, Chapter Five tried to analyze the circumstances under which Balinese and other Indonesians represented theatre and dance, and the relationship

between these and foreign accounts of their practices. In doing so, two major themes emerged. First, even though the goals of the scholars had notionally changed, the presuppositions on which their arguments rested remained largely the same. Second, in the attempts of Balinese scholars to articulate themselves in foreign terms, there seemed to be a difficulty for Balinese practices to neatly fit imported dichotomies and categories. So an antagonism between indigenous and imported metaphysics—that is, the presuppositions that inform speaking, thinking and acting—started to be discernible, and additional questions about the purposes of this knowledge emerged.

Chapter Six concluded the first part of the thesis by bringing together the governing ideas of studies examined in previous chapters. I investigated what these studies have claimed that Balinese performance does: in other words to express, which rested on the idea of ‘reading’ performance, and so textualization; and to function, with the accompanying false dichotomy between efficacy and entertainment. Expression and function were analyzed as forms of totalization and closure that attempted to limit the possibilities of engagement with the objects and subjects of study. In an effort to avoid this narrow, if not hegemonic, approach to Balinese performance-related practices, Part One concluded with more open-ended questions: Under what conditions do Balinese practices become articulable? What is the importance of role in articulating practice? What other modes of engagement might there be if Balinese are not concerned with the totalizing notions of expression and function? In posing these questions, Chapter Six indicated the necessity for fieldwork, themes from which provided the basis for Part Two of the thesis.

Part Two: After Theatre

Having argued that most major approaches to Balinese performance have consistently flattened a complex congeries of practices into a single positive object, Part Two aimed to

focus on the social and political contexts of Balinese performance-related practices and searched for ways to engage with the object of practice once I established that asking questions about Balinese theatre as a unitary and coherent object is inadequate.

Chapter Seven examined the notions of culture (*budaya*), tradition (*tradisi*), and creativity (*kreativitas*), which occurred consistently in discussions of Balinese performance with ISI students and academics, as well as with professional actors and non-experts. Noting the regularity with which these Indonesian terms were used, as well as the fact that they were neologisms absent from the Balinese language, I searched for them in the official pronouncements of the International Bali Arts Festival (PKB), which is promoted as a showcasing of Balinese culture. This analysis brought to the fore an attempt to control and infantilize audiences on the part of those who were deemed or deemed themselves official articulators of Balinese culture. In order to examine these issues in practice, I then focused on a televised *Sendratari* that was broadcast on TVRI. Despite the performance's strikingly nationalist overtones, discussions with a group of spectators suggested that pre-articulation does not equal pre-acceptance, and pointed towards the need for further research on the subject. Subsequently, taking the repetition of a similar performance, or excerpts of that performance, in the context of different festivals, the chapter turned to a discussion of the dissolution of difference between several performance practices as a way of commoditizing them and so allowing their transactability—the free flow of capital. The power relations involved in this process, however, seemed to put Balinese in conflict with themselves in different roles.

In order to address the antagonism between performance-related practices and their official articulation as cultural capital which I suggested at the end of Chapter Seven, and to test whether it was relevant in different, non-commoditized occasions, in Chapter Eight I focused on a *Topèng Pajegan*, the non-substitutability of which was crucial to the context of

the cremation ceremony in which it took place. As the people present only seemed to watch parts of the actor's performance, being engaged in different practices at different times, the chapter began by asking what one might make of this occasion once the academic tendency to naturalize it as theatre has been overcome. This led to discussions with Balinese that focused on the purpose of performances and rendered the idea of considering a *Topèng Pajegan*, a *Lègong*, or a *Sendratari* either identical or as belonging to the same category absurd, with the exception of occasions that rested on the *representation* of such practices as 'culture,' 'theatre,' or 'dance.' These discussions also suggested that deciding what context is relevant is not self-evident, but itself involves an articulation, the acceptance of which by others determines and is affected *inter alia* by the amount of power one is able to bring to bear.

As articulation is often misrepresented as interpretation, Chapter Nine tried to challenge the assumption that interpreting practices are universal, by taking into account Balinese ideas about knowledge and meaning. Taking a *Drama Gong* as the case study, the chapter proceeded to contrast ideas of power, status, and the purpose of performances between the official account given by government officials and professors of Balinese performance, and ones suggested by non-experts and by actors without an official role. There emerged an antagonism between the official articulation of Balinese theatre and culture, which aimed to provide the only acceptable interpretation of Bali as a place free of conflict, and that of actors, who tended to present a context-based array of performance practices. The latter included and stressed the importance of 'audiencing' as a practice that both shapes a performance and can allow ample opportunity for criticism and conflict. Through a consideration of this antagonism, the chapter arrived at the ultimate question: If *discours* is a violence we do to things, then what is criticism for, and under what conditions is the interpreting subject possible in Balinese performance?

Further Research

The extent to which Balinese performance-related practices have been entangled in European and American representations of theatre, religion, and culture, and the pervasiveness of these representations through their proliferation *via* mass recording and mediation, has meant that a critical analysis (in the Greek sense of taking apart) has been a pressing as well as daunting task. In addition, the state of Bali studies today and the fact that Bali is one of the most studied places in the world have created a situation in which professional Balinese are both numerous and well-versed in the official articulation of Bali, fluent in terms that foreign researchers will doubtlessly find familiar. Despite spending fifteen months conducting fieldwork in Bali, it was only near the end of my research that I managed to break through the official parlance, and to reach sufficient fluency (not only linguistic, but also contextual) to be able to access, recognize and start to appreciate alternative accounts of Balinese performance-making and watching practices. This is an area that is both under-analyzed and limitless in scope, and one which could lead to a rewarding new approach to the study of Balinese performance that would both engage critically with the complex of representations involved in making ‘theatre’ an object of study and with performance-related practices and antagonisms situated in (not pre-defined) context.

This thesis has been necessarily tilted towards a theoretical critique, rather than being based primarily on ethnography, both because of the relative limitations of my previous training and linguistic ability, and because the starting point was a theoretical concern about Theatre and Performance Studies. So this study invites further, detailed ethnographic work on a variety of topics, from practices of performing, televising and broadcasting performance, to practices of articulating performance and culture, with special attention to the registers and styles of commentary, criticism, and argument in contemporary Bali.

Another direction for further research would be to extend the findings in order to ask in what ways Java and Bali differ, while treating neither as essences, but rather as arguments or *discours*. What might the study of performance practices in Bali tell us about other areas of Indonesia and *vice versa*? In addition, the preoccupation of this thesis with context and representing as a practice has wider applicability in contemporary Theatre Studies and its tendency to valorize the immediacy of experience at the expense of an attention to mediation and its implications. Conversely, Deleuze's distinction between the visible and the articulable applied to media-related practices may prove an exciting and rewarding area of exploration by Media and Cultural Studies scholars. In addition, Balinese ideas about meaning and rationality may provide such scholars with a worthwhile alternative to approaching other people's practices of mediation and self-representation.

Finally, the thesis has attempted to stress the urgency of being in dialogue with the subjects of study rather than subsuming them under—or replacing them with—Euro-American categories of judgment. Even so, one is left in the bind of having to use European thinking in order to argue against its supremacy over everyone else. It might be a refreshing notion to use Balinese theory of mind and knowledge in order to understand, for instance, UK academic practice, if only to demarcate and probe the limits of research as a hegemonic practice.

I would like to conclude with a final thought. This thesis was made possible by a negative argument: I have been able to examine the disparate practices of *Drama Gong*, *Topèng*, *Sendratari* and so forth *via* what I argued was a false categorization of these practices as 'theatre' in studies so far. But is there a positive argument for a connection between these things? And if not, how and why might one differentiate them from, for instance, fighting, official speeches, or wedding negotiations? This is not a call for re-casting every practice *as* performance; it is, however, a call for the reconsideration of how, when,

and why we posit and represent our objects of study, and for a re-appraisal of the extent to which this matters.

APPENDIX A: TRANSLATIONS

Chapter Four

1. *‘véritable hiéroglyphes qui vivent et qui se meuvent’* (Artaud 1964 [1931]: 93).
2. *‘Et ces hiéroglyphes à trois dimensions sont à leur tour surbrodés d’un certain nombre de gestes, de signes mystérieux qui correspondent à l’on ne sait quelle réalité fabuleuse et obscure que nous autres, gens d’Occident, avons définitivement refoulée’* (Artaud 1964 [1931]: 93).

Note that *refoulement* is the French translation of the term for repression used by Freud.

3. *‘Ils démontrent victorieusement la prépondérance absolue du metteur en scène dont le pouvoir de création élimine les mots’* (Artaud 1964 [1931]: 82).

Chapter Five

1. *‘Kehidupan seni pertunjukan Bali [...] tampaknya terjebak oleh pergulatan tarik-menarik antara arus balinisasi dan globalisasi’* (Dibia 2012a: 2).

Chapter Seven

1. *‘Yan nonton sasolahan ring pura, nika sakadi ring sasolahan sakral, I raga ten bes sanget nyingakin sasolahané, napi niki jelék, niki luung, ten. Saantukan, sasolahané nika, sakralné nika, wantah sasolahan sané bagian saking upakara. Nénten hiburan. Yan sasolahan hiburan, wawu I raga nika lebih fokus menilai bagaimana gerakannya, terhibur apa tidak, sesuai dengan tujuan tarian nika. Yan sasolahan sakral, tujuannya nénten untuk hiburan. Sakéwanten tujuannya nika untuk upakara. Untuk melengkapi upakara. Yan sasolahan ring wantilan, nika hiburan. I raga nonton, luung napi ten sasolahane, jelék napi ten sasolahane, saantukan nika, tujuan tarian niki menghibur kita, jadi kita di sini bisa mengomentari, bisa menilai, saya sudah terhibur atau tidak? Jadi, jika tarian yang di wantilan kita pastikan lebih fokus untuk melihat bagaimana gerakannya’* (Ayu, interview 25/02/2012).

2. *‘Yéning gumanti sampun asapunika majanten pisan kahanan basa, sastra, miwah aksara Bali sayan ngwibuhang, mawastu prasida mikukuhin budaya Baliné, sané taler kanggén dasar sajeroning ngwerdiang miwah nglimbakang pawangunan budaya bangsa, pinaka cihna pawangunan budaya nasional’* (Ida Bagus Oka 2002: vi).
3. *‘Kebangkitan jiwa nusantara akan segera terjadi dan dimulai dari Bali. Karena Bali adalah waris terakhir jiwa nusantara’* (Lahirnya Gajah Mada).
4. *‘Saya senang ini. [...] Storynya, sejarahnya. Ini juga masuk di ini anak-anak ya? Pelajaran. Seperti tadi Kadèk “oh siapa itu, ibunya Gajah Mada?” [...] Saya juga tidak tahu sejarah yang ini dari awal. Dan ceritanya cepat, ya? Tidak ada panjang panjang’* (Gèk, Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).
5. *‘Oh merah-putih. Indonesia itu. Tapi dulu waktu Majapahit warna putihnya di atas. Merahnya di bawah. Maknanya lain’* (Ketut, Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).

Chapter Eight

1.

Gèk: *Saya tidak berani. Belum pernah nonton Calonarang. Nak dadi mayat, diupacari. Sing bani, saya pulang.*

Self: *Kalau di TV, berani nonton?*

Gèk: *Kalau siang, saya berani nonton. Kalau malam tidak.*

Ketut: *Calonarang harus malam, setelah jam dua belas, lebih seram gitu. Karena kalau waktu nyalonarang, waktu undang orang sakti itu isi penari, sudah malam. Kalau siang lucu itu, bukan waktu*’ (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).
2. *‘Pas kita record, mau kita edit, tidak ada gambar. Terus kita tahu hal hal itu tidak boleh direkam. Sakralnya luar biasa. Kita bisa ngambil, tapi gambar tidak masuk. Gambar blank. Putih’* (Wayan Sutawan, Dewata TV, interview 23/07/2012).
3. *‘Kenapa? Karena memang ada di antara orang orang yang meninggal itu diupacara itu, apa ya, sama dengan dialog topeng itu’* (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).

4. *'Saya di sana punya teman, masih mudah meninggal. Ya masih mudah meninggal. Punya dia tiga anak. Istrinya pertama meninggal. Istrinya kedua... anak-anaknya masih mudah. [...] Banyak orang yang menangis. Karena sepertinya dia mendengar, melihat bahwa benar benar seperti roh itu yang ngomong sama istrinya, sama anaknya. Atau ada yang punya pikiran sama'* (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).

5. *'Orang-orang yang nonton itu, bilang yang ada di panggung itu bukan topeng, bilang "Bapak saya yang ngomong itu"'* (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).

6. *'Makanya sepertinya seniman itu ada istilah Pasuk Maku namanya. Pasuk Maku itu, seniman itu, harus dia berkomunikasi dengan alam. Di masyarakat, di warung dia senang. Makanya seniman seniman dulu minum minum di warung, sabung ayam bukan? Mancing dia senang. Karena dia dari sana dapat informasi tentang masyarakat itu. Makanya dalam filosofinya antara macro dan micro. Macro ini harus dimasukkan ke micro. Setelah itu kita pentas, baru kita keluarkan. Seniman itu harus dia bertaruh dengan masyarakat. Terlepas dari masyarakat baik, apa masyarakat jelek, orang senang mabuk, tidak apa, tidak apa. Kita ambil, apa dia bilang ambil, ambil itu. Kita ambil, setelah kita punya, sekarang baru kita "oh saya punya bahan seperti ini bahan ini cocok untuk ini, bahan ini cocok untuk ini, bahan ini cocok untuk ini. Mungkin ini bahan saya dapatkan untuk upacara ngaben cocok." Ini saya pernah dengar ceritra seperti ini, saya bergaul dengan seorang yang pemabuk, suka minum, mungkin ini cocok dipakai dalam pertunjukan di pura, gitu. Karena ada orang yang mabuk, suka minum, kadang kadang dia punya pikiran yang kadang kadang positif, kan? Ada omong yang benar walaupun perilakunya tidak benar tapi dialognya ada yang benar. Itu kita ambil. Saya tahu itu mabuk tapi omongnya benar. Kan? Ini yang kita ambil. Mistinya seniman itu harus bebas bergaul. Tentang mana, siapa harus tahu. Ke sana kita banyak sekali dapat bergaul. Kadang kadang kita baca buku, kita dapat, terus kita dengar di masyarakat ngomong, kita gabungkan. Dan carikan tempatnya cerita. Makanya macro masukkan dalam micro, setelah kita pentas, keluarkan. Berikan kembalikan lagi kepada macro. Dari macro ke micro, dari micro ke macro lagi'* (Kodi, interview 12/08/2012).

Chapter Nine

1. *'Mukanya jelek tapi hatinya luar biasa bagus'* (Lanan, interview 20/05/2012).

2. Cupak Pengeng Excerpt A

Dolar-Dolir: [singing] *Uli di Bangli tiang rauh mariki. Ngarayu tu ayu sexy. Di satu mamunyi tiang tusing paduli miribang iya iri ati. Ulian takut mamunyi tu ayu bajang lugu sampunang ragu ragu bilang i love you meme bapak mu setuju. Nganten malu ngalih déwasa paling ayu mas kawin ngebon malu né penting bulan madu di hotel bintang tujuh laut au au.* [DISENSOR]

Dolar: *Jani raga kené 'lir.*

Dolir: *Jani ada di jagat langit peteng dedet. Ngiring ida Déwa Agung Cedil. Du Agung ba gelem kéweh. Yén ba raja gelem panjaké pasti gelem.*

Dolar: *Benéh ba orang naké malu.*

Dolir: *Ratu du Agung!*

Dolar: *Oh dadi nganginang mai?*

Dolir: *Dadi nyén ngorang sing.*

Dolar: *Kadén sing dadi malah ditu dogén.*

Dolir: *Oh kéto.*

Dolar: *Ainggih durus durus medal ratu.*

[Cedil masuk]

Dolar: [singing] *Pajalané sada.* [stops singing] *Sing san maan milihing jelema ane kené kené dadi raja. Jelema gelem geleman.*

Dolir: *Nak katurunan sing dadi. Durus durus mamarga.*

Dolar: *Durus. Inggih inggih raris mamargi. Né mara parekan sayang né. Jeg sing ngomong sing ngomong ba né.*

Dolir: *Ngomong gen kéweh.*

Dolar: *Uli telun sing ngomong né.*

Dolir: *Pang pang.*

Dolar: *Jeg sing ngomong ba ya né.*

Dolir: *Pang pang ngomong.*

Dolar: *Apa kel oranga. Sing bisa ngorang apa ya.*

Dolir: *Né kené dadi raja.*

Dolar: *Nah sing ngomong. Jeg ngangisahang dadi raja kené.*

Dolir: *Ais tarik napas.*

Dolar: *Nah. Kénkén ngomong misi ngajengit doen. Kénkén ngomong.*

Dolir: *Jeg sing ngerti dadiné né. [...] Cara kidang misi nganggot.*

Cedil: *Halo.*

Dolar: *Ngomong to?*
 Cedil: *Eh kéto Lardo.*
 Dolir: *Weh tu kénkén ngomong? Mabading tu? Lardo. Dolar kénтен. Lardo!*
 Cedil: *Eh Dolar ao?*
 Dolar: *Ao.*
 Cedil: *Saya lupa tadi. Dolar, ikuti saya dari belakang. Tut wuri [Old Javanese].*
 Dolir: *Titang sareng?*
 Cedil: *Bareng. [Continues in Old Javanese]*

3. *'Bermacam macam. Saya pernah baca ada pelawak, atau pemain bondrés, dia sebagai kritikus, dia sebagai mediator juga, sebagai informan. Dia sebagai kritikus. Dia sebagai pejuang juga. Heroism juga. Tapi tanpa disadari, hal itu sudah dilakukan. Misalnya dia sebagai kritikus. Dia sudah melakukan, tapi dia tidak tahu. Karena dia tidak pernah baca ada diberitahu oleh orang menjadi kritikus, seperti ABC. Dia mengkritik. Misalnya ada odalan. Di odalan itu ada orang sedang sembahyang. Ada musik. Besoknya, saya pentas. Saya bilang itu. Saya kritik itu. Tapi alus. Supaya yang mengundang tidak marah, supaya yang upacara tidak malu. Saya sebagai kritikus. Besoknya, yang punya acara itu tidak lagi musik. Masukan. Pada hal saya tidak nelson yang punya acara bilang "Pak besok orang mudah itu jangan musik." Saya kritik sedikit saja' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).*

4. *'Tidak boleh dia malawak. Artinya tidak cocok karena karakter raja muda harus serius dan lebih berwibawa. Kata-katanya ada maknanya. Seperti dalang' (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).*

5. *'Orang yang dihormati, orang yang mengerti, orang yang memahami, orang yang mengetahui banyak hal, ini orang yang tidak tahu. Ini jawaban di sini [Orang yang dihormati]. Tapi apakah dia tahu?' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).*

6. *'Raja jadi Cedil. Saya bukan raja!' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).*

7. *'Penari bondrés harus tahu banyak: musik, tari, situasi. Inikan sulit: kata kata, kalau keluar, tidak bisa dihapus. Kalau menari, salahkan, orang tidak tahu. Orang melihat, pun tidak tahu. Kalau ngomong, kata kata adalah senjata. Bicaramu adalah harimaumu. Kamu bicara yang bagaimana, orang bisa mati. Orang bisa celaka kalau omong-omong yang tidak*

bagus. Orang bisa mati. Sekarang politik. Saya lihat politik di Indonesia, wow. Wow. Hebat ini. Saya catu sedikit. Kalau saya pentas di pemerintah, saya bilang sedikit saja, orang sudah ... [claps]. Sedikit aja, jangan banyak. Kalau banyak saya nanti diambil. Seperti nasi goreng, ada sambal sedikit. sudah cukup itu' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

8. 'Ini seperti perang. Sebelum pentas saya banyak harus amunisi' (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

9.

Ketut: Kadang kadang ada yang Drama Gong yang sudah exis lama, terkenal, actinya bagus. Seperti namanya Bintang Bali Timur itu di manapun ada orang orang yang suka Drama Gong datang.

Gèk: Saya senang masih dengar. Karena tetangga masih ada kaset.

Ketut: Tapi kaset ini suara aja.

Gèk: Saya dengar, dia punya kasetnya, terus dihidupkan, saya dengar dari sini. Senang saya. Terkenal.

Ketut: Seperti pisah ini, wataknya bagus, actingnya bagus. Tapi sekarang ada yang dibikin Drama Gong untuk satu kali pertunjukan selesai gitu. Ada upacara dulu di Bona anak anak muda bikin Drama Gong untuk sekali saja. Lucu lucu. Drama Gong yang terkenal dulu ...

Gèk: Lodra namanya, Lodra.

Ketut: ...yang dadi raja. Lodra namanya.

Gèk: Raja muda. Bagus suaranya.

Self: Acting bagus maksudnya apa?

Ketut: Kadang kadang suara dia itu... seperti di pilem, seperti sinetron, aktor lama dengan aktor baru itu kadang kadang ada dibikin-bikin itu, kadang kadang dialog tidak lancar. Seperti masing mengingat-ingat. Dia masih menghafal. Kalau hanya yang udah profesional dia udah tahu. Kalau baru dia menunggu... seperti dipikir 'sekarang bicara apa?'

Gèk: Terkenal Lodra, Bali Timur... Sampai sekarang saya senang (Bona, discussion 23/05/2012).

10. Cupak Pengeng Excerpt B

Sangar: Klungkung sané banget berbudaya, Klungkung sané wangiang titiang, Klungkung

sané suciang titiang. Om Swastyastu Klungkung. Ngiring sampunang nyalid dados nak Bali, ngiring bangga dados nak Bali. Om Swastyastu. Nah né ané dimuka mara luwung. Om swastyastu. Mara ketiang masaut gèk'é. Eh luh jaman modéren, gumi maju Klungkung bypass suba tembus entungang penyakit lacuré. Penyakit sugih bakta. Uningin penyakit lacur, kerék. Bulénan, kusta, penyakit lacur. Klungkung gumi maju entungang penyakit lacure, penyakit sugih aba. Struk, lever, ginjal. Cara tiang kené jeneng tiangé, tiang lèk ngaba penyakit lacur. Tiang kencing manis, pak. Uningin kencing manis? Asal nepukin né manis manis dot ngencingin. Klungkung daerah bersejarah, tepuk tangan buat klungkung. Tiang mara nikanga dija lokasiné ngigel? Dija lokasi pentasé di Klungkung, tiang ba takut, pak. Ampura. Bungut tiangé bungut Bulèlèng. Aslin titiangé Karangasem Manggis. Kelih titiangé di Bulèlèng. Ngoyong tiang di Gianyar. Tiang jelema polang-poleng tiang. Lédangan tiang ten midep basa alus.

[My translation of Excerpt B in Chapter Nine stops here. However, I include the passage I summarized for reference.]

Yan di Klungkung kadirasa dé ja ngajak orang tuané ajak musuhné nu matiang nika. Tepuk tangan buat kaalusan Klungkung. Basa alus Klungkung Karangasem tiang akui nika. Lédangan tiang kelihné di Bulèlèng, di Bulèlèng bahasané walaupun agak kasaran tapi kenahné luwung luwung. Contohné ampura pak tiang ngoyong di Bulèlèng ajak tiang ngoyong di asrama dajan tiangé nak gusti. Yan di Bulèlèng ngajengin makan kené carané: Hi Gusti, mai. Ajaké maamah-amahan. Pang nyak maurab-uraban bunguté. Biasa di Bulèlèng. Coba di Klungkung ngomong kéto. Setuta bunguté. Yan di Bulèlèng, ampura pak, cicing bisa dadi dokter. Pisagan tiangé masuk kedokteran di UNUD empat setengah tahun ba lulus. Mulih dadi dokter kaukina kén timpalne. Iiiih cicingé né suba dadi dokter poloné. Bayangkan di Bulèlèng cicing bisa dadi dokter. Coba, ampura niki. '45 Indonesia merdeka, Garuda Pancasila terpampang beténé misi bhineka tunggal ika. Sakondén Garuda Pancasila misi bhineka tunggal ika di Bali [...unclear] misi bhineka tunggal ika. Tepuk tangan buat kita orang Bali. Di Bali, ampura pak, malén-lénan kabupatené, malén-lénan bahasané sakéwala dadi abesik di Bali. Contoh, ampura niki, nyamané di Karangasem Saru Ambayen: Bih, can kija ragané? Wawu nika mantuk. Nak Karangasem ngomong kéto satu jam bisa maloglod bolné. Yan di Klungkung sorot ger pak. Gerdini ba bébéké tuni. Di Klungkung ampura niki. Yan di Bangli sorot ngoh. Ba ngamah cicingé ngoh? Ngoh. Basa paling kepara basa Gianyar, pak. Tiang [...unclear] makan. Meli nasi di Kètèwèl, kené bèt anaké ditu. Mai

mai. Meli nasiné mai. Bene leneng. Bayangin anaké di Gianyar bene leneng yan to amahé bisa pungk giginé. To Gianyar. Yan di Badung lén buin, pak. Badung, kodya. Tiang meli palinggih dugasné ngajak nak uling Kesiman, kené betné: Pak, pak. Tiang meli palinggihé, pak. Lengkap ajak batarané [dual meaning: 1. Tuhan (God) 2. a small step]. Das ked pukul ndasné. Batara kénkén pak? Nika, pak, pondasi sanggahé. Maksudné batarané koné. Kéwah. Mawinan nika lah uniknya Bali.'

11. *'Orang yang bergaul sangat luas. Orang Bali yang global itu. Ke mana-mana dia punya pertemanan'* (Dibia, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

12. *'Kalau kita melihat bagian ini, kita belum tahu kita nonton pisah Cupak. Terus, lucu. Tetapi, ada beberapa lelucon, beberapa unsur unsur yang secara etik, tidak baik. Satu yang bersifat porno, satu juga yang melecehkan unsur agama. [...] Itu menurut saya, tidak baik. Tapi sehingga hiburan memang lucu'* (Dibia, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

13. *'Dari judul Cupak Pengeng saya pikir humor tinggi. Cuma saya setuju dengan Pak Dibia, ... kok hancur itu. Itu pertama. Kedua, kostumnya uraka, tanpa konsep. Kalau ini modèren, ada motif macang, campur. Dialog banyolan mereka memang sudah bagus. Tapi porsi banyolan ini, tidak terkait tema Cupak'* (Sudibya, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

14. *'Saya merasa, semua lawak di Bali sekarang beda. Ini mempunyai identitas, ingin menunjukkan keanehan. Sehingga mereka tampil dengan seperti ini. Tujuannya adalah ingin menarik perhatian penonton sehingga dia mengatakan memiliki identitas di mana pun dia tampil. Seperti Cedil, misalnya. [...] Jadi, dari klasifikasi lawakan berbeda. Terkait tema, mereka sering menyampaikan sesuatu yang sifatnya mungkin kritik. Kritik yang terjadi di lingkungan masyarakat. Mungkin penonton ingin hiburan aja, tapi bagian mereka masyarakat diharapkan untuk memahami bagaimana berperilaku'* (Suteja, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

15. *'Kalau menurut saya, tadi pembicaraan para pemain bondres itu, memang semuanya mengangkat situasi di masyarakat. Bagaimana situasi di masyarakat. Upamanya kadang kadang ada masalah perempuan, kadang kadang ada masalah korupsi, masalah keragaman. Nah itu biasanya mungkin sindiran'* (G.A. Oka Partini, ISI, discussion 29/02/2012).

16. *'[...] bebas, karena masyarakat di pura bebas. [...] Di PKB harus ikut motto'* (Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

17. *'Sesuai dengan tema Pesta Kesenian Bali ke34, yaitu Paras Paros yang dimaknai sebagai dinamika dalam kebersamaan, pawai ini mempresentasikan potensi kekayaan dan dinamika perkembangan kesenian dan keragaman kesenian Nusantara'* (Governor Pastika, PKB Opening Ceremony 10/06/2012).

18. *'Dinamika dan kebersamaan menjadi dua kata kunci yang dapat mendorong terciptanya ide ide kreatif. Tema ini dapat menyegarkan identitas, memekarkan daya cipta dan memelihara etik dan estetika dalam penggarapan karya seni. Tema ini juga memberi inspirasi untuk memperkokoh persatuan rasa kebersamaan dan toleransi yang relevan dengan upaya kita bersama untuk membangun tatanan kehidupan yang lebih beradab. Tatanan kehidupan yang berlandaskan pada kedamaian, persaudaraan, dan kerukunan baik antar kelompok masyarakat maupun di antara bangsa bangsa'* (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, PKB Opening Ceremony 10/06/2012).

19. *'Rangkaian Pesta Kesenian Bali juga merupakan sarana untuk membangun budaya kebangsaan yang sangat penting dalam menyikapi tantangan peradaban dewasa ini. Pesta Kesenian Bali dapat menjadi benteng untuk mengokohkan falsafah, tata nilai dan kreativitas seni yang tetap berpijak kuat pada akar tradisi. Akar tradisi terbangun dari kehalusan budi dan tata nilai masyarakat Bali yang religious. Sering saya katakan Pesta Kesenian Bali merupakan wahana unjuk kreativitas serta inovasi dari para seniman Bali untuk diketengahkan (presented) tidak hanya kepada masyarakat Bali tetapi juga masyarakat dunia. Pesta Kesenian Bali diharapkan menjadi jendela informasi, jembatan komunikasi antar budaya sekaligus hubungan diplomasi budaya antar negara. Dalam kaitan dengan upaya makin mengenalkan kekayaan budaya bali pada dunia, kita semua patut berbangga'* (Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, PKB Opening Ceremony, 10/06/2012).

20. *'Dalam konteks itu, adegan perang atau kekerasan dalam garapan seni, tentu kurang cocok dengan tema yang diusung kali ini. Karenanya, hal-hal demikian tidak perlu dihadirkan dalam garapan seni. Agar garapan seni yang ditampilkan para seniman betul-betul mencerminkan pesan Paras-Paros, tentu perlu ada seleksi. Hal yang sama disampaikan Wayan Geriya, bahwa PKB 2012 mendatang diharapkan*

mampu membangun kembali semangat Paras-Paros. Jika kini semangat itu dirasa telah mengendur, melalui panggung seni kita mencoba merevitalisasi semangat tersebut. Dengan demikian, suasana kebersamaan dan damai senantiasa terbangun. Seni merupakan bahasa universal yang mampu menembus sekat-sekat politik, ekonomi. “Melalui seni kita mampu mengangkat harkat manusia,” ujar Dibia dan Geriya’ (The Bali Post 2011).

21. ‘Kebersamaan. Kalimat itu tidak lucu. Itu kalimat bagus untuk berorasi. Saya lihat itu. Persatuan. Jadi persatuan, kesatuan itu apa? Harus banyak baca, kemudian cari persamaan, persaudaraan kan saya dengan teman, saya cari bikin lelucon, sama audien juga. Audien itu sangat menentukan. Kenapa saya bilang sangat menentukan audien itu? Karena setiap acara berbeda. Penonton berbeda. Konsep boleh kita bersiapkan dari rumah, tapi penonton berbeda. Tidak sama lucunya. Bisa tidak lucu di sini, bisa di sana lucu. Kadang kadang, saya keluar, orang belum mengerti. Kadang saya keluar, orang mengerti. Sehingga dia tertawa’
(Suanda, interview 27/07/2012).

APPENDIX B: ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. *Tetaring*: a temporary shade made of woven coconut leaves.

Photograph courtesy of I Nyoman Darma Putra.



Figure 2. Semar in Javanese *Wayang*.

Image in the public domain.



Figure 3. Cedil, one of the most recognizable *bondrés* characters in contemporary Bali, played by I Ketut Suanda. This is Cedil's usual makeup and outfit.



Figure 4. I Ketut Suanda as royalty (Prabu Peteng Dedet/Dewa Agung Cedil) in *Cupak Pengeng*. Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 5. Dolar, another well-known *bondrés* character, played by I Wayan Tarma. This is his usual makeup, but the outfit varies.

Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 6. Dolir in *Cupak Pengeng*, played by Gusti Nyoman Tinggal. Dolar and Dolir usually perform as a duo. This is Dolir's usual makeup, but the outfit varies.

Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 7. Sangar, played by I Putu Gede Suartika. Sangar and Senger (see Figure 8) usually perform together.
Image source: BaliTV.



Figure 8. Senger, played by Gusti Ngurah Jaya Swarya. Senger's characteristic is his disfigured face and garbled speech.



Figure 9. Sokir, played by I Ketut Rudita. Sokir's voice is very high-pitched, but he carries himself with bravado. Usually a low-caste character, in *Cupak Pengeng* he presents himself as minister Pak Agung and carries a sword to fit the role.

Image source: BaliTV.

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